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Youth Guidance in Marriage Problems (A Conference Paper)

"Youth Guidance in Marriage Problems" is the topic of this article. Before we begin the actual consideration of the topic, it may be well to get our bearings and to give some definitions. What do we mean by guidance? We believe that this term designates, or should designate, any effort by means of example and by means of precept, by direct or indirect instruction, to show people, especially young people, the true and right way, the best course to follow. Since this guidance, according to the topic, is to be a guidance of youth regarding the problems of one of life's greatest experiences, courtship and marriage, we believe that the scope of this article should be to show them the divine origin and the Scriptural purpose of a Christian marriage on the basis of God's own Word, and to help them not only to enter the holy estate of matrimony in the proper way, but to live in marriage as sensible, Christian people. We are convinced that such guidance should be a systematic and planned effort rather than a haphazard, hit-and-miss fumbling about, something carried out in one instance, in one year, only to be forgotten in other cases. It is also our opinion that such guidance should be given over a period of years and that it should not be something that is foisted upon the young people or thrust upon them at a rather inopportune time, when it may be the source of much embarrassment and even be the cause of much heartache and untold harm. Considering the circumstances of our day and age concerning marriage and the home, many pastors, parents, and youth leaders have reached the conclusion that there is real need for the guidance of youth in marriage problems. But since there are also such as hold a contrary opinion, it may be well to consider first of all the need of such guidance.

I. The Need of Such Guidance

When the sincere pastor takes a serious look at the homes and families of his church, he sees many homes in which there is unhappiness; he sees many homes that are childless; he sees many homes in which there is strife and contention. The average pastor, especially in urban congregations, does not have to look long for homes in which there has been a separation of husband and wife, and in many cases even a divorce. Recently, in about six months, the writer had to deal with eight cases of marital trouble involving divorce, divorce suits pending and questions of re-marriage of divorced people. A recent issue of the *Walther League Messenger* brought the news that in one New Jersey court more than 5,000 suits for divorce were filed in 1941. This sad situation regarding marriage and the home, which prevails in our country and which deeply affects also our own people, shows the need for more and better guidance in marriage problems. We live in a day and age of very confused and complex marriage situations. During the last decade we have seen many marriages delayed one year, two years, perhaps even as long as five years, because of the economic situation. During the last year, especially the last few months, we have seen just the opposite take place. Hundreds of young couples have rushed to the altar of marriage because of the war scare, because of the defense program, because of the Selective Service Act. In St. Louis alone more than 18,000 marriage licenses were issued in 1941. Both situations, the delayed marriage and the hastily contracted marriage, produce special situations which necessitate guidance and direction.

Another factor which shows the need of marriage guidance is the fact that our own people, influenced by the movies, by modern literature, and by the world as such, by the loose moral standards of America, frequently assume utterly wrong attitudes toward marriage. The average pastor in Synod could undoubtedly duplicate situations similar to the ones which have confronted the writer during recent years, demonstrating so fully the warped conception concerning Christian marriage which is found in the minds of many of our people. Just recently a Lutheran woman complained about the unfaithfulness of her husband, but it was not so much the sin of adultery that she complained about, but the fact that he had picked a girl of low morals and shady character. She said, "If he had only associated with a respectable girl, I would not have considered it so bad." Again and again in our day and age one observes collusion in securing a divorce. So frequently the innocent party, or should we say the one having at least the better side of the argument, especially if it is the husband, will nevertheless permit the wife to secure a divorce on fictitious,

trumped-up charges, and even pay the bill for securing this divorce. They do not seem to realize the fact that they are doing anything wrong. The common statement is, "This is the suggestion of the lawyer and the more gentlemanly thing to do." Frequently one finds today that people, both married and unmarried, feel that it is perfectly proper, an innocent pastime, to keep company with a married man or a married woman, provided you do not stoop to physical intimacy. In this connection we are thinking of the case of a minister's daughter, who married a non-Lutheran, contrary to the counsel and advice of her father, who does not hesitate to accept flowers and calls from a former suitor. We are thinking of the case of a married Lutheran with sound Lutheran training who could not see that it was wrong for him to take his sister-in-law to outings, dinners, and shows during a period of unemployment until both his home and the home of his in-laws were wrecked by separation and divorce. We are thinking of the case of an active Walther Leaguer, a Sunday school teacher, who readily admitted that she was going out on dates with former boy friends who are now married. She could not see the danger of offense or of sin in the situation. Such warped attitudes on the part of our own young people, married and unmarried, certainly need correction. Scriptural guidance in marriage problems is a definite need.

Another reason for more guidance of youth in marriage problems is the fact that so many of our young people, constantly in touch with the world at work, at play, at school, in their social relations, meet so many people outside their own religious group, outside their own Church, and thus many mixed marriages are the result. A mixed marriage usually brings with it some very specific problems, and young people about to enter such a union need special guidance and special direction. Where both the husband and wife are members of the same Church, have the same religious convictions, and also the same attitude toward the divine institution of matrimony, it is natural that many adjustments are made quite naturally and quite simply, but this is not the case when ideas and ideals concerning marriage are very different, which is the case so frequently in mixed marriages.

The need of greater guidance for youth in marriage problems is recognized by many of our pastors. Before writing this article, the writer consulted with fifteen pastors of our Church in various parts of the country and everyone of them felt the need of such guidance for our youth. We take the liberty to quote two of these pastors, one a pastor in a larger city and the other a pastor in a rural congregation. The city pastor writes: "Yes, I believe that there is need for such guidance. In the first place, in spite of

everything which you tried to intimate to the children during the catechetical instruction, there is in so many cases a lack of Christian consciousness with reference to the marriage problems. In those cases, of course, where both parties are loyal and devoted Christians, many of the problems are solved in the spirit of love and forbearance. But in so many other cases in which the Christian consciousness does not obtain, or in which persons of another faith or of no faith are involved, it is essential that these problems be studied and solved from the positive Christian standpoint. In the second place, there is a matter of sheer ignorance. In spite of the supposed enlightenment of our day there is often the crassest sort of ignorance among our young folks with regard to the marriage problems. Then, so far as the physical side of the marriage problems are concerned, it is a fact that so much of the information that our young people, especially the young men have, has been gathered under the most unfavorable circumstances, in the taverns, in the saloons, on the dance floor, in the movies, so that many of them have a warped conception of the marriage problems, which often makes for much of the unhappiness of their married life."

The pastor in a rural area has this to say: "Yes, I believe that there is a need for youth guidance in marriage problems. My reasons are: a. The unwillingness or inability of many parents to be of any real assistance to their children in guiding them in the problems of courtship and marriage. b. Our youth is in constant contact with false ideals for marriage and the wrong solutions for marriage problems, such as given in movies, magazines, books, bureaus, universities, associates in work and society. c. Misconception of the ideals on marriage in the Bible, as, for example, on the word *obey*; the claim that the Bible does not solve the sex problems in marriage, etc. d. Ignorance on the part of our parents and youth on the real and lasting guidance which the Bible has to offer in marriage problems."

The need of such guidance is also recognized by many of our young people. Especially the more serious-minded of our young people are definitely disturbed by the sad conditions concerning marriage and divorce in our own country. Young people are usually very eager to discuss such matters at Walther League meetings and at Walther League Summer Conference Camps. Where the relationship is the proper relationship between the pastor and his young people, they will not hesitate to discuss such matters with their own pastor. They will seek his counsel and advice, not only in matters of the head, their educational problems, but also in matters of the heart, their love and courtship problems. In a recent meeting of a Senior Walther League the entire group,

without exception, stated in writing the need of such guidance in marriage problems. One young man wrote, "Because a person's married life consists of about two-thirds of their normal life, certainly something should be done to enable people to live their married life in the best way possible. It would serve to keep people from marrying unwisely and at the same time help to make existing marriages more happy." Anyone who has served our young people at Walther League Summer Conference Camps knows how eager many of them are to discuss such personal problems with the dean of their camp or with one of the discussion leaders. Camp workers have frequently had the personal experience to have individual campers or little groups of two or three stay for an hour or more after discussion periods with questions pertaining to their own personal life and their own personal courtship problem. All of this seems to indicate that there is a distinct need for guidance of our youth in the problems of marriage.

The need for guidance of youth in marriage problems, I believe, is also indicated by the flood of literature that has been published on the subject of marriage and the home in recent years. The library of Concordia Seminary will show you books with titles such as these: *Education for Christian Marriage* by Nash, an Episcopalian (1939); *Modern Marriage, a Handbook for Men* by Popenoe, General Director of the American Institute of Family Relations of Los Angeles (1940); *An Introductory Study of the Family* by Schmiedeler, a Catholic, with a special chapter on "Premarital Preparation" (1930); *Youth's Problem No. 1* by Alfred L. Murray; *The Modern Family* by Myers, head of the Department of Parent Education at Cleveland College (1935). There are many other books in the Concordia Seminary library in which whole chapters are devoted to the subject of marriage, marriage problems, and the home. Not only the flood of literature indicates a definite need in this matter, but the fact that churches have created commissions on marriage and the home, that schools and colleges have added courses on the subject, that the Y. M. C. A. and similar groups offer training courses intended to prepare especially the young people for marriage, all definitely point to a distinct need of such guidance and training.

In our own circles the need has been recognized, for the Fort Wayne Convention of the last year instructed the President of Synod to appoint a committee of pastors and laymen to study "the entire subject of Christian marriage and the family and other problems of Christian life arising out of the changing social order." This new committee is to work with the Board of Education, Board for Higher Education, and the Young People's Board.

II. Who is to Give Youth Guidance in Marriage Problems?

Parents have the God-given obligation to train children for the future, also for marriage. They can do this very naturally, without creating artificial situations. They are deeply interested in the welfare and the future happiness of their children. Parents, however, are often handicapped by ignorance in this matter. The State may also give such guidance. The State is interested in the future homes and the future citizens of the country. Much marriage guidance of the wrong sort has been given by the State in Russia and also in Germany. Read the January, 1942, *Readers Digest*, pages 140 and 141, and you will see what is done in Germany. State and schools usually stress the physical, sex side of marriage. The Church has an obligation. The Church must present the Biblical view concerning this divine institution. The Church must warn against sins so frequently connected with this estate. The Church may also, in connection with Biblical guidance, give common sense directions to help young people avoid some common pitfalls of courtship and marriage.

III. What has been Done to Give Our Young People Such Guidance?

One certainly dare not overlook the fact that many parents in our circles have given to their growing sons and daughters guidance and training for marriage. Very frequently this guidance may not have been anything formal, but the fine example of a Christian marriage demonstrated in a Christian home by Christian parents is a powerful influence and a wonderful training for young people. But many of our parents have gone no farther than to give their young people the example of a Christian marriage. Often they have neglected to give to their growing sons and daughters even the basic facts of sex and of marriage. We believe that there has been improvement, but much more could and should be done by Christian parents for their sons and daughters in this matter.

Certainly in our circles our pastors have sought to give the members of their confirmation class instruction concerning the Sixth Commandment, both regarding the positive and the negative side of the Commandment. They have told their classes about marriage, about engagement, and about divorce. They have undoubtedly sought to make such instruction as clear as possible, but I fear that many have thought such instruction in confirmation classes would be sufficient for life. Just a little clear thinking in this matter should show us that this cannot be the case. At the time of confirmation instruction our children are still children, immature boys and girls, who really do not get the full import of

the message when the pastor discusses marriage and the problems of marriage. Soon after confirmation the counter-influence is nearly overwhelming. Confronted by ungodly associates in high school, confronted by the influence of modern literature, confronted by the loose morals and false marital standards of the movies, the instruction concerning marriage in the light of Scripture is frequently dulled and often completely wiped out. If no serious and systematic effort is made to reinforce and strengthen the teachings of the Bible concerning marriage, many of the young people will go into this institution, which is to mean so much for their future happiness, with the ideas and ideals of Hollywood and the columns for the lovelorn in the newspapers, instead of Christian, Biblical ideas and ideals of marriage and the home.

Most of the pastors of our circles have sought to re-emphasize the teachings of confirmation days concerning marriage, the obligations of marriage, and of the Christian home by occasional sermons on marriage and the home, or at least by references to such matters in some sermon or address. Pastors whose young people are connected with the Walther League and who utilize the program the Walther League promotes in its topic discussions, have frequently used such topic discussions to deal with their young people in matters of courtship, engagement, and marriage. A number of pastors have also used the occasion when a young couple made arrangements for the wedding ceremony to discuss with them not only the ceremony as such, the music and the solo, the flowers and the rehearsal, but they have spoken to such young couples on the real purpose, the real aims of Christian marriage. But if we view all that has been done in our circles in the matter of youth guidance for marriage, we must confess that comparatively little has been done, and even that which has been done was not done regularly, was not done systematically, and certainly not generally throughout the length and breadth of Synod. In this opinion the writer is not alone, but a number of active, consecrated pastors in various cities of our country, to whom letters were addressed recently in this matter, have without hesitation admitted that very little has been done by them and by the brethren to give real Christian, pastoral guidance to the young people in one of the greatest and most enduring experiences of life. It is our sincere conviction that much more should be done and much more could be done.

IV. What Should be Done to Give Better Guidance?

In the first place, it is necessary to give to our people, both old and young, repeated instruction in the Christian ethics of matrimony. This should not only be done during the years of childhood and immaturity, but it should also be done during the

years of early adolescence, the late teens and early twenties, and even later when people are about to be married. It is necessary, absolutely necessary, to tell our people just what the Bible teaches concerning marriage and divorce and that this teaching is based upon the solid truth of the Word of God and not upon the guess-work and often fallacious findings of sinful men, learned educators, and college professors. As Reu says in *Christian Ethics*, our people must learn anew "that marriage is that divine institution which consists of the legal and voluntary union of two persons of the opposite sex for an exclusive, continuous, and lifelong communion of all interests in the physical and intellectual sphere." This instruction should not only be given in the form of sermons and lectures, but opportunity should also be given for discussion, for questions, for an exchange of opinion. Our people must learn again and again that marriage is more than a civil contract, a purely human agreement between two parties. It is a divine institution, in fact, the oldest in existence, dating back to the days before the Fall (Gen. 1 and 2). On the basis of the Bible we must point out to our young people that the three chief objects of marriage are: mutual aid (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:29), sex communion, and procreation. Sex communion is the chief distinguishing characteristic, but not the chief purpose, of marriage. "The twain shall be one flesh." It involves much more than mere physical union; it is a highly personal relationship. Anything less than that is bestial. Procreation is, of course, one of the big objectives of marriage (Gen. 1: 28), and, in fact, it is limited to that relationship by divine will in spite of everything which the proponents of free love in Russia, in our own country, or elsewhere, may say. According to Ps. 127:3, God has reserved for Himself the decision whether or not He will grant this happy fruition of the marital union. Our people, both old and young, must learn anew that marriage is a lifelong union, indissoluble except by death or divorce on Scriptural grounds: adultery (Matt. 5:32) and malicious desertion (1 Cor. 7:15). As prerequisites of marriage our people should consider physical and mental fitness, and the presence of conjugal love, something far different from mere sex attraction or mere "puppy love." Compatibility of personality is a further important requisite. Too great a difference in education, refinement, and general culture, too great a racial difference and too great a difference of religious conviction will cause difficulty. It is true today what the old Germans used to say: "Zwei Glauben auf einem Kissen, da ist der Teufel dazwischen." Statistics made in the Maryland youth survey show that the number of mixed marriages which go on the rocks of marital disagreement are only a fraction less than those where both parties were unchurched. Since the burden of maintaining

a home will fall upon the shoulders of the husband, no young man should offer himself to a young woman in marriage unless he has reasonable prospects of being able to carry that burden. Economic stability includes more than just that. It means that the young man has found a definite place in life, has a definite calling or vocation. Marriage means the beginning of a new family, the addition of a new social unit to the community, a new family altar to the Church. Not until the young man is able to assume the responsibilities of being the head of a house and the representative of the family group should he bind a young woman to himself for life.

Very little will be done in this field of guidance unless we make available for our pastors and teachers and youth leaders information on this subject covering the economic, the social, the physical, and the spiritual side of marriage. Information is available, but it is largely in such a shape and form that our pastors must spend much time and even study to gather it for use in discussion groups. We believe, therefore, that it would be well that a series of outlines, rather complete, be prepared for our pastors for discussions or talks to young men and to young women, similar to the series prepared by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the booklet *Looking Forward to Marriage*. This booklet contains six studies: 1) Marriage Ordained of God (Gen. 1: 26-28; Mark 10: 2-12). 2) Marrying the Right Person (Gen. 29: 15-20; Matt. 19: 3-6). 3) Premarriage Ideals (Matt. 7: 1-5; Luke 14: 28-30; Gal. 5: 13-25). 4) The Christian Home in a Changing World (Heb. 12: 27). 5) Achieving a Real Home (Matt. 7: 24-27; 13: 44-46; 1 Cor. 13: 4-7). 6) "Christianity and Sex" (Gen. 1: 27; 2: 24; Mark 10: 6-9).

We know, of course, that there is a wide difference of opinion in our circles as to the value or place of sex instruction by the Church. Some maintain that this is absolutely the sphere and duty of the parental home, but many others believe that the Church has also an obligation in this matter. The pastor should at least have full knowledge of the physical and sex functions of marriage. He should be able to discuss such matters frankly with his parishioners, especially in private interviews, but it may be best to utilize the help of a Christian doctor for group instruction in the field of biology and sex. Such a man can speak on such subjects with much more authority than the pastor, and in most cases his advice will not be objected to as readily as when it comes from a theologian, who is supposed to know the Bible but not the secrets of sex life. In this connection we may state that a number of pastors have made use of doctors and nurses for such instruction of their young people. Other pastors, just a few to my knowledge, have personally gathered their young men and their young women

in separate groups for frank and open discussions on all marriage problems.

We also believe that series of sermons on marriage and the home are not out of place for youth guidance in marriage problems; especially evening and midweek services can be utilized for such work. Though sermons are good, discussions on the basis of a definite outline, which the young people can take home, are usually more fruitful.

Guidance of this nature can also be given in Bible classes. The study material must, of course, be arranged so that it fits the particular age group with which the pastor is dealing. It is not out of place to consider these matters rather frankly even in the years of early adolescence, when the first storms of love sweep over our boys and girls.

Instruction can and should be given when young couples announce for the wedding. Many of our more progressive pastors have been doing this on the basis of a simple questionnaire. Samples of such questionnaires appeared in the *American Lutheran* some years ago and in the *Religious Digest*, June, 1937. Most pastors using a questionnaire for their young couples use a simple questionnaire, which emphasizes the arrangements for the ceremony, but which gives one the opportunity to speak to the young couple about many things pertaining to their impending marriage.

One of the finest opportunities for guidance of our youth in marriage problems presents itself to the pastor when he goes through the marriage ceremony with the young couple present for the purpose of making arrangements for the wedding. On the basis of Form No. 1 in our *Agenda* the pastor can well point out that marriage is a divine institution, that the relation of husband and wife is really a wonderful relation of love, as exemplified by the love of the Savior for His church, that there will be crosses and afflictions especially in connection with the duties of the woman as a wife and mother and of those of the husband as the father and provider. The purpose of a Christian marriage in relation to the future of the human race can well be mentioned on the basis of the Bible passage found in the Form. One can study the marriage vow, consider the beauty of such a vow, its importance and dignity. The prayer can lead to a discussion of family worship and the need of God's blessing for marriage in all its phases. For such guidance of our young people the old form for marriages lends itself much better than the second and shorter form, much better also than some of the home-made forms which pass as wedding forms in some of our churches.

More importance could be attached to the marriage ceremony. In the opinion of the writer no pastor should perform a Christian

marriage ceremony without giving the couple some Christian, pastoral advice in the shape of a well-prepared address. In many places the address has been dropped because "The people will not listen anyhow," or "because it takes too long." In many cases the form has been cut, the section concerning the troubles of the married estate has been deleted in order not to shock the sensibilities of the blushing bride, the "obey" often is omitted, and so it happens that the parade of the bridal party to and from the altar frequently takes longer than the ceremony itself. This is a mistake and constitutes a lack of pastoral guidance.

It may be well to mention that one of our pastors tries to solve the problem by offering courses of instruction on marital matters to the parents of his church, so that they may be better qualified to deal with their young people at home. Another pastor makes it a practice to write to all young couples on the occasion of their first wedding anniversary reminding them of their marriage vows, marriage obligations, and marital blessings. One of our Sunday schools gives the book *Why Was I Not Told* by Marquardt to all high school graduates in that Sunday school. Other pastors have sought to solve the problem of postwedding adjustment by clubs for the newly married where marriage problems could be rather freely discussed.

In conclusion it may be said that it does not make much difference whether the pastor uses one form of guidance or another, whether he deals with the young people in groups or whether he would rather deal with them as individuals, but all evidence points to the fact that all Christian parents, pastors, and teachers should give more regular, more systematic, more planned guidance to our youth in this important matter which so definitely affects their whole life, both physical and spiritual, and at times, because of abuse or sinful misuse, even jeopardizes their soul's salvation.

St. Louis, Mo.

ELFRED L. ROSCHKE

Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks

(Continued)

VI

The indignation of the moderns reaches white heat when they are asked to receive every word of Scripture as inerrant and authoritative. If Verbal Inspiration means that every word of Scripture must be received as God's word, with unquestioning faith and obedience — and it means just that — they will have

none of it. That is their strongest objection to Verbal Inspiration, and they express their abhorrence of it with the frightful word *legalistic*.

Let H. E. Fosdick tell us why he can no longer believe in Verbal Inspiration: "We used to think of Inspiration as a procedure which produced a book guaranteed in all its parts against error and containing from beginning to end a unanimous system of truth. . . . When Josiah swore the people to a solemn league and covenant, or when Ezra pledged the nation's loyalty to the keeping of the Levitical Law, the Bible which thus was coming into being, was primarily a book of divine requirements. It told the people what they ought to do. . . . One might have expected the Christians to break with this legalistic employment of Scripture," but "when the New Testament was added to the Old and the whole Book was bound up into unity by a theory of inerrant inspiration, Christians used the whole Book as the Jews had used part of it; it was a divine oracle to tell men how to live." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 30, 236 ff.) R. Seeberg thanks God for the "fall of Verbal Inspiration." "The wall to which I refer was the *Verbal Inspiration of the Bible*, the conviction that every word of Holy Scripture was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the authors of the Old and New Testaments. . . . Every single word was regarded as of legal validity, and precisely on that account every single word was said to be given to man by the inspiration of God. It was not interests specifically Christian, but the theories and ideas of later Judaism which produced this 'old' theory of inspiration." (*Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 1, 32.) *The Lutheran Church Quarterly* thus voices its protest: "It is of course no secret that Verbal Inspiration is not taught in some of the seminaries of the United Lutheran Church. . . . What results 'when the Word of God is identified with the words of the Scriptures' is 'a legalistic and an atomistic conception of the Scriptures, far more congenial to Calvinism than to Lutheranism.' " (1937, p. 195.) "Scriptural theology will not set up a deified Book in the place of the deified Church of Roman Catholicism nor hold to legalistic, unhistorical, and unpsychological theories of its inspiration. . . . It will not quibble over such questions as whether the Bible is the Word of God or contains the Word of God." (1934, p. 114. By Prof. T. A. Kantonen.) "Ockham regarded the Bible as an object of faith. In the Bible he found the positive expression of the will of God. Only Scripture could authoritatively establish what the content of faith was to be. The Bible was inspired, word for word! Ockham, it is true, surrendered his belief in canon law and in the legal authority of the Pope. But there was nothing particularly evangelical in this surrender; for he substituted an

authority which was just as legalistic — the Bible." (Our italics.) "The Bible became a legal (not evangelical) authority." (1940, p. 149.) "There is a spirit of legalism that pervades many of the ranks of Midwestern Lutherans, a kind of approach to the truth of God which insists on 'book, chapter, and verse' for all the 'eye-blanks' of life and must be undergirded by the authority of print on paper for every conscious breath in order to be assured of full salvation. In its last analysis this resolves itself into a conception of the Holy Scriptures as a mechanical work of the Holy Spirit, inerrant in every word and detail in their original form." (1939, p. 26.) "An atomistic or legalistic attitude results in trying to make specific New Testament words and sayings binding as external forms on the Church." (1940, p. 16.) J. P. Smyth is of the same mind: "Thus we find, in the first step of our investigation as to how God inspired the Bible, that He did not inspire it in the *rigid*, literal manner known as verbal inspiration. . . . Verbal inspiration is now fast being thrown to the moles and bats with the rest of the world's old, discarded mind-lumber." (*How God Inspired the Bible*, p. 118.) One more pronouncement to show how strongly the moderns feel on this matter. G. Wehrung: "Die Aufrichtung der Schrift als einer formal gueltigen Autoritaet genuegt also nicht. . . . Die gesetzliche Buchreligion. . . . Die Vorstellung einer mechanischen Inspiration ist auch schon auf juedischem Boden heimisch. Diesen intellektualistisch-gesetzlichen Schriftgebrauch duerfen wir heute als grundsaeztlich ueberwunden ansehen." (*Geschichte und Glaube*, pp. 301, 305.) The moderns feel that Verbal Inspiration implies "a legalistic authority of Scripture" and that "that is unworthy of [Christian] theology." (That is Dr. Pieper's diagnosis of the case. *Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 230.)

"Legalistic authority of Scripture" — could that mean that the moderns refuse to receive some of the Scripture statements or all of them as binding, authoritative? Hear G. Aulén: "Es ist nicht moeglich, alle einzelnen biblischen Aussagen als gleichwertige Gottesworte zu betrachten. . . . Es ist selbstverstaendlich, dass eine Theorie, die jeder einzelnen Bibelaussage absolute goettliche Autoritaet zuerkennt, mit innerer Notwendigkeit den Blick fuer die verschiedenen Richtungen in der Bibel traeht und zu einer Verdunklung des eigentlich Christlichen fuehren muss. . . . Der Gedankengang des Legalismus draengt sich ueberall ein und praegt die Theologie." (*Das Christliche Gottesbild*, pp. 251, 254.) The conservative wing of the moderns denies that *every* statement of the Bible is authoritative;²⁹² the larger group, the liberals, denies

292) *Augsburg Sunday School Teacher*: "Too often the Bible is reduced to the level of a well-stocked arsenal from which authoritative proof texts may be drawn almost at random. . . . This practice makes

that any statement is authoritative; "there are those," says *The Living Church*, May 8, 1937, "who will say that they cannot see how any New Testament passage can be taken in a doctrinaire sense." Strahan is one of them. He declares that he and the "Protestant scholars of the present day . . . do not open any book of the Old or New Testament with the feeling that they are bound to regard its teaching as sacred and authoritative. They yield to nothing but what they regard as the irresistible logic of facts." (*Hastings' Encyclopedia*, VII, p. 346.) Sherwood Eddy is another one. "The Bible is not intended as a storehouse of authoritative proof texts." G. L. Raymond "has found few, if at all intelligent, who did not practically accept the text of Scripture as suggestive rather than dictatorial." (*The Psychology of Inspiration*, p. 126.) J. Aberly: "Let us in the first place notice that authority in religion cannot be made to rest on a record in and by itself." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1932, p. 231.) E. E. Flack: "When we speak of the authority of the Scriptures, we do not mean that they are independently authoritative. They have no authority either apart from Christ, who is the primary authority, or apart from the Church, in which Christ's power is operative." (*The Lutheran*, Oct. 1, 1936.) On this point the conservatives among the moderns agree with the liberals. Nitzsch-Stephan, as quoted by Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 32, feels justified in stating: "Nobody bases his dogmatics, in the Old Protestant fashion, on the *norma normans*, the Bible." Everybody feels like Th. Kaftan: "The modern theology, for which I stand, refuses to submit to any purely external authority," this external authority being Holy Scripture, the written word of the apostles and prophets. (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 273.) The moderns go so far as to denounce Verbal Inspiration with its corollary that every Bible statement calls for unquestioning faith and obedience as unchristian. W. Herrmann declares: "The Reformation opposed to the Roman Church the fundamental principle that Christian doctrine is to be derived from the Scriptures alone. Everything depends, therefore, on a correct definition of this principle of the authority of Scripture adopted by the Evangelical Christianity that appeared in the Reformation. It would be unchristian if it meant the acknowledgment of any chance sentence of the Scriptures as God's word, by which a Christian ought to be guided in his life, and the community in its doctrine. Such a principle of the author-

it appear that *every portion of the Book*" (our italics) "is authoritative doctrine — perhaps an extremist exegesis of 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 contributed to this error. The Bible is no collection of doctrinal statements but a book of life. . . . If the same unfailing authority is ascribed to all the 'human' elements in the Bible, etc." (July, 1938, p. 388 f.)

ity of Scripture would set a book above God's revelation." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 58.)²⁹³⁾

To express their abhorrence of the idea that every teaching of Scripture is binding upon us, the moderns make use of the opprobrious terms "manual of doctrine," "code of laws," etc. R. F. Grau: "Die Heilige Schrift ist uns nicht mehr ein grosser vom Himmel herabgesandter Gesetzeskodex mit seinen einzelnen Paragraphen, Beweisstellen genannt." (See Baier-Walther, I, p. 102.) Hofmann is the great authority for this. Obtaining doctrine out of Scripture, he says, "would imprint a legalistic feature on doctrine"; it would make of Scripture "a code of laws of faith [Sammung von Glaubensgesetzen]." (*Schriftbeweis*, I, p. 9. See Pieper, *op. cit.*, III, p. 510.) The liberals are in perfect agreement with this. H. E. Fosdick: The Christians, sad to say, refused "to break with this legalistic employment of Scripture. . . . Ecclesiastical bodies have employed the Bible as though it were a book of canon law to define the procedure and organization of Christian churches forever." (*Op. cit.*, p. 237.) H. L. Willett: "The Book does not claim to be a carefully prepared manual of conduct. It refuses to accept responsibility for the claim that all of its utterances are rules to be followed." (*The Bible through the Centuries*, p. 294.) J. Oman: "On the one hand, critical results are ignored, and doctrines are drawn from Holy Writ like legal

293) Some more pronouncements.—Do these repetitions serve a good purpose? We want the moderns to bare their inmost thoughts to us. The more they say on this subject the less we will have to say in refutation. Their bare statements carry, for the Bible Christian, their own refutation.—*The Christian Century*, March 2, 1938: "No issue between the churches can now be settled by the quotation of a Biblical text, as our fathers used to assume. No issue will be settled by reference to an authoritarian standard, whether doctrinal or ecclesiastical." John Oman: "The teacher of divine truth . . . will not care to stop with authorities either of the Church or of the Scriptures." (*Vision and Authority*, p. 188.) C. Stange: "The attempt to derive the individual dogmatical statements from Scripture, stems from the Romish view. Scripture is viewed as the dogmatical authority." (*Dogmatik*, p. 193.) Bishop Charles Gore: "It ought to be said frankly that Luther often clings to the older notion of a verbally inspired Bible. He actually speaks of the Holy Spirit as the *Author*" (italics in original) "of the books of Moses; he submitted his judgment undoubtingly to Scriptural statements on points of natural science; and in a famous controversy he appealed to a New Testament verse as an infallible oracle, to be accepted with the purest literalism. In some respects he fastened the letter of the Bible on those who followed him more bindingly than had been done before." (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 58.) F. Buechsel: "Die Offenbarung Gottes auf sein Wort zu beschraenken, ist falsch und ergibt leicht eine dogmatische Verknoecherung des Offenbarungsgedankens, die das Wort Gottes schliesslich in eine Lehre verwandelt und die Autoritaet des Wortes Gottes nicht ausreichend begrunden kann." (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, p. 3.) E. Brunner: "The doctrine of verbal inspiration materialized the authority of the Scriptures and ruled out the decision of faith." (*The Mediator*, p. 343.)

decisions from the Statute Book." (*Op. cit.*, p. 182.) — H. C. Alleman: "Dr. Reu compares the Bible to a deed of sale. 'That the sale is reported in the newspapers does not add a single thing to the sale. . . . The sale is not closed until the deed is made out and handed to the new owner.' Thus Scripture is, as it were, the legal document of salvation. It sustains the same relation to our salvation that the deed of sale holds to the possessions of property.... 'Is it,' says Dr. H. Offermann, 'because they do not yet—or no longer—understand the position of their own Church, but have been slipping, without knowing it, into an attitude toward the Bible which is essentially un-Lutheran because it is unevangelical, and are thinking of the Bible as a legal code, a law book with many paragraphs?' " (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, pp. 353, 357.) H. Offermann's statement in *Luth. Church Quart.* of 1937, p. 407, is repeated in *What Is Lutheranism?* p. 67: "Lutherans do not regard the Scriptures as a legal code with many paragraphs. They accept the Scriptures, and they believe in them primarily because they believe in Christ." A. R. Wentz: "The spirit of essential Lutheranism does not rhyme with the literalism of the Fundamentalist, which makes the Bible a book of oracles, a textbook with explicit marching orders for the 'warfare between science and religion.'" (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 91.) — It is clear that these men do not like Verbal Inspiration. As Dr. Pieper puts it: "In order to discredit Verbal Inspiration, it is further asserted that the verbal-inspirationists regard Holy Scripture as 'a law-codex which fell down from heaven,' as 'a paper pope,' etc." (*Op. cit.*, I, p. 365.)²⁹⁴⁾

294) Do you care to hear additional statements? They will show how boldly and baldly the moderns express their aversion to Verbal Inspiration. E. Schaefer deplores that "people cultured in other respects are under the spell of monstrous ideas regarding the Bible and look upon it as a sacred codex which claims to be the product of the supernatural Spirit of God, who supplied to the Biblical authors all the words, not only the contents but also the required verbal form." (*Glaubenslehre fuer Gebildete*, p. 18 f.) Dr. Walther submits this specimen from Luthardt's *Theol. Literaturblatt*: "Es ist purer Missverstand; als ob der Verfasser die Zeit rechristianisieren wollte, welche die Bibel als ein unmittelbar vom Himmel herniedergekommenes Buch ansah und die Wahrheit ihres goettlichen Ursprungs so einseitig auffasste, dass sie vergaess, dass die Propheten und Apostel den Schatz goettlicher Weisheit in irdischen Gefaessen trugen." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 4.) R. Seeburg believes that the holy writers "did not think and write with the intention of producing formulae for all times and circumstances," criticizes "the reformers of the Middle Ages, who questioned the legal authority of the Pope, but only in order that this legal authority might be the more definitely transferred to the Bible, which contained 'laws,' just as the findings of councils or the decrees of the Popes were laws legally binding for Christendom," and praises Luther, who brought it about that "Scripture ceases to be a code of laws." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 15, 20, 91.—But Luther was not consistent. On page 21 we read: "Yet Luther would at another time, without due previous reflection, make

By now the indignation of the moderns has reached the boiling point. They give vent to their indignation in epithets such as "spiritual despotism," "slave mentality," etc. They denounce Verbal Inspiration as having built "a suffocating prison house" and stigmatize those who believe in the inviolability of every part of Scripture as "slaves of the letter," submitting to "the tyranny of words," the "tyranny of an infallible book." When we protest against giving the words of Scripture a new meaning in order to bring Scripture into harmony with "science" and "modern thought," they pity us and upbraid us for upholding "the enslaving legalism of the letter," "tyrannous literalism." And they have found a still more loathsome term of reproach. The verbal-inspirationists do homage to a "paper pope." The Pope exacts blind obedience of his slaves; and within Protestantism, where Verbal Inspiration rules, Holy Scripture exercises the same tyranny!²⁹⁵⁾ — Away

use of Scripture in all its parts, practically or polemically, as a divine law.") G. T. Ladd deplores that the pupils of Luther did not follow Luther — that Luther whom Seeberg praises. "The post-Reformation theory of the Bible considered the principal office of the Bible to be that of imparting a ready-made system of religious dogmas. . . . The theory proved itself a vicious one." (*What Is the Bible?* p. 413.) Those poor dogmatists! Marcus Dods writes: "This was due to the pedantic and elaborate dogmatism of the seventeenth century. The Bible had so persistently been used as a textbook to prove dogma that this came to be considered its main use. . . . Each of its utterances, no matter in what department of truth, was supposed to be final and authoritative." "To think of the Bible as a convenient collection or summary of doctrine, a textbook of theological knowledge, is entirely to misconceive it. . . . The Bible must not be thought of as 'a collection of truths formulated in propositions which God from time to time whispered in the ear to be communicated to the world as the unchanging formulas of thought and life for all time.'" (*The Bible: Its Origin and Nature*, pp. 66, 96 f.) — Verbal Inspiration is a horrible thing in the eyes of the moderns. It asks us to regard the Bible as a lawbook and thus compels us, says W. Herrmann, to accept even the false teachings of the Bible! W. Herrmann actually states that the doctrine of predestination set forth Rom. 9—11 "has no basis in faith." That "brings us to face the question whether we are prepared to follow Scripture even in that which we cannot understand to be a notion rooted in our faith," which "faith" cannot accept. And "if we decide to do this," if we accept a teaching which we know to be false, but accept it because it is found in Scripture, "we are treating the Bible as a lawbook which requires from us external obedience" (*op. cit.*, p. 134). That ought to be sufficient to discredit Verbal Inspiration!

295) R. F. Horton: "As a matter of fact, the Bible stood before that crude dogma of infallible inspiration was invented, and the Bible will stand when that dogma has passed away. . . . And if even one soul is led out of the comfortable but suffocating prison house of the received dogma into the open air of the true revelation, the author will not have toiled in vain." (*Revelation and the Bible*, pp. 25, 407.) J. S. Whale: "Loyalty to truth in the shape of literary and historical criticism . . . has set the modern man free from the bondage of the letter, the prison house of verbal infallibility." (*The Christian Answer to the Problem of Evil*, p. 77.) R. H. Strachan: "Very many today have rightly discarded the notion of accepting their religious beliefs on an external authority,

with Verbal Inspiration, this dogmatic fetter (Lenski on 2 Thess. 2:4, 5, page 422: "Some of the newer commentators have found

such as they have been encouraged to believe are the Church or the Bible. . . . Such slave mentality is at the source of religious infallibilities: the infallible Book or the infallible Church." (*The Authority of Christian Experience*, pp. 16, 26.) G. A. Buttrick: "Craving external support, men raised an infallible book to the vacant throne. From that false move and its tyranny we now break free." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., XII, p. 223.) G. L. Raymond: Men who are "at all intelligent accept the text of Scripture as suggestive rather than *dictatorial*. . . . The apparent theory of Jesus was that if men came to take into their natures the inspiration derived from the suggestions that He gave them—from such a suggestion, for instance, as that they were sons of God—they could safely be left, in applying the suggestion, to exercise the 'liberty' with which He had made them 'free.'" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 126, 140.) E. H. Delk: "Higher criticism has set theology free from that tyrannous literalism and false idea of inspiration which made all attempts at the adjustment of theology with modern thought in history, science, and philosophy either impious or revolutionary. . . . No theory of verbal inspiration is any longer tenable." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1912, p. 568.) W. H. Greever in *The Lutheran World Almanac*, 1934–1937, p. 94: "This approach and view . . . guarantee the liberty of the evangelical spirit against the enslaving legalism of the letter," and in the *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 221: "In Fundamentalism there is such rigid subservience to the legalistic authority of the letter in recorded revelation that the spirit, purpose, and content of revelation are subordinated and obscured, if not actually lost." G. Aulén, on Luther's attitude towards the Bible: "It is well known that at times he took an independent attitude, but often he slavishly depended on Bible texts. A classical example: his line of argumentation on the Lord's Supper." (*Op. cit.*, p. 251.) W. C. Berkemeyer: "There is a sense in which the very words of Scripture must be the standard, *not in any legal way* but because they provide the classic original expression of the ideas and experiences and facts which go to make up the Christian faith. . . . Such a theology will escape, as far as it is humanly possible, the 'tyranny of words.'" (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 345 f.) J. M. Gibson: "Our Lord said, 'Ye seek to kill Me, because My Word hath not free course in you.' 'Free course' observe, and that was said to those who believed in the most thorough way in the verbal and literal inspiration of the Scriptures. They were slaves of the letter and knew nothing of the freedom of the spirit. And so it often is in our own times." (*The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture*, p. 108.) — Alexander Schweizer sagt von der Heiligen Schrift: "Sie ist kein papierner Papst, kein Stellvertreter Gottes und Christi, sondern sein Zeuge; nicht das schon fertige Gold, sondern das reiches Gold in sich schliessende Erz; und dem christlichen Geiste in der Kirche kommt es zu, das Gold auszuscheiden." (See W. Rohnert, *Die Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift*, p. 233.) F. Gogarten: "Es ist in der Tat nicht so, dass fuer den protestantischen Glauben an Stelle des lebendigen roemischen Paptes der tote papierne Papst des Bibelbuchstabens getreten waere. Sondern der protestantische Glaube ist auf das lebendige Wort der Bibel gerichtet," etc. (See *Schrift und Bekenntnis*, 1928, p. 100.) G. P. Mains: "The Church arrogated to itself the claim of sole authority and infallible wisdom for the spiritual direction of mankind. . . . It is still true that large sections of Christendom are under the nightmare spell of this spiritual despotism. Inheritances of this despotism are such gratuitous attributions as verbal and plenary inspiration, of inerrancy, assumption of the entire historic and scientific accuracy of Biblical statement. . . . The Reformers made the mistake, and most easily so, of assigning to the Bible alone the place of infallible and inerrant authority which the Church had so stoutly but falsely claimed for itself." (*Divine Inspiration*, pp. 79, 81.)

a new way to interpret this whole section — they have discarded the doctrine of inspiration, 'this dogmatic fetter' ")), this cast-iron theory (M'Intosh, in *Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* p. 313: "Akin to this is the misrepresentation that the upholders of the Bible claim adopt a slavish literalism; and rash writers like Dr. Horton, more apt at inept epithet than cogent argument, upbraid them as maintainers of a 'cast-iron theory' ")! The moderns refuse to play such a humiliating role as to bow to every single statement made by the old prophets and apostles. Verbal Inspiration, the instrument of galling tyranny and dark superstition, must be thrown to the moles and bats.

The bitter invective against Verbal Inspiration reaches its climax in the use of the ugly word "bibliolatry." It is bad enough that the moderns use "biblicism" as a term of reproach. They make copious use of it. For instance — we need not multiply examples — G. Aulén has no use for "the old biblicism, which restricts the divine revelation to the Bible." "Biblicism, the application of the theory of verbal inspiration, laid its heavy hand on the theology of orthodoxy." "Everywhere the principle of legalism intrudes and molds the theology. That is the disastrous consequence of biblicism." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 251, 255, 386.)²⁹⁶⁾ But "biblicism" as a term of reproach is not strong enough for them. "Bibliolatry" suits them better. H. E. Fosdick: "From naive acceptance of the Bible as of equal credibility in all its parts because mechanically inerrant, I passed years ago to the shocking conviction that such traditional bibliolatry is false in fact and perilous in result." (*Op. cit.*, p. 273.) E. Brunner repeats Fosdick's statement: "Orthodoxy has made the Bible an independent divine thing, which just as such, as a *corpus*

296) Let us get clear on the meaning of biblicism as the term is used by the moderns. It means, as Aulén tells us, the practice of sticking to the words of the Bible, treating them, all of them, as inspired and inviolable. They are biblicists, says P. Althaus, "who identify the Word of God and Scripture" and look upon the Bible as "the supernatural infallible manual of doctrine." "Biblicism has a legalistic conception of the Word of God, out of harmony with the Reformation." (*Die letzten Dinge*, pp. 67, 74.) In addition, biblicism restricts authority in religion to the Bible. *The Living Church*, Nov. 11, 1933: "It ought to be said at once that the New Testament is one of the sources of our faith, not the sole and exclusive source. . . . That is presupposed in the tradition of the Great Church everywhere outside the circle of sixteenth to twentieth century Protestant biblicism." The statement of the *Lutheran* of Oct. 7, 1936, quoted above: "The Scriptures are not independently authoritative. They have no authority either apart from Christ or apart from the Church," was made in connection with the discussion and repudiation of the "biblicism of the later dogmaticians." If that be biblicism, we want to be known as good, thoroughgoing biblicists. But you cannot insult a modernist more than by intimating that he has not freed himself from all traces of biblicism. When the moderns want to praise a book, they will say of it: "The volume is not marked (as so many are) by theological prejudice and Biblical bias." Thus the *Lutheran*, March 25, 1942.

mortuum, is stamped with divine authority. . . . This materialistic, or, to be more exact, this idolatrous acceptance of Bible authority has done great damage to Christian faith." (*The Word and the World*, p. 92.) J. A. W. Haas uses the same term: "We have been too much misled, even in the Lutheran Church, by the non-Lutheran conceptions of the Bible, which often tend to bibliolatry. . . . Let us return to the Biblical and Lutheran idea of the living Word." (*The Lutheran*, Dec. 8, 1932.) Again: "The Bible must never be thought of apart from the living, unitary Word and become a codex. Otherwise we have bibliolatry and substitute a book for the creative Word." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 279.) And again: "There must be a clear distinction kept in mind between the Word of God and the Bible. . . . Luther and true Lutheranism do not worship the record. . . . Luther and true Lutheranism have never made a fetish of the Bible as a book." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 176.) M. G. G. Sherer: "Christian liberty knows how to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the shell and the content, between the chaff and the wheat, between the letter and the spirit. . . . Christian liberty does not fall into the sin of bibliolatry." (*Chr. Liberty and Chr. Unity*, p. 81.) T. A. Kantonen: "A living theology . . . will not set up a deified book in the place of the deified Church of Roman Catholicism nor hold to legalistic, unhistorical, and unpsychological theories of its inspiration." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1934, p. 114.)

Is there not a stronger term than bibliolatry? Well, Haas used the term "fetish"; H. L. Willett uses it: "The higher criticism has forever disposed of the fetish of a level Bible; it has destroyed the doctrine of a verbal inspiration." (*Op. cit.*, p. 264.) And the Princeton professor Homrighausen warns all against listening to the verbal-inspirationists: "Be fearful of those who make the Bible a fetish." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., IX, p. 452.) "Relic-worship" also serves the purpose. Bishop H. Martensen (Denmark): "Here [in the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century] the Scriptures are regarded as a book of laws; and the individual Christian, not maintaining a relative independence over against the Scriptures, is unable to distinguish in the Scriptures between the essential and the incidental, and practices a genuine relic-worship towards the letter of the Bible." (*Christian Dogmatics*, p. 45.) The conservative moderns do not agree in many points with the liberal moderns, but do agree with them in denouncing the unquestioning acceptance of every Scripture teaching on the bare word of Scripture as a form of wicked idolatry. The liberal K. Thieme of Leipzig asks: "An welchen Universitaeten, so muss man neugierig fragen, gilt die Schrift als Wort goettlicher Offenbarung im Sinne von Laibles massiver *Bibelvergoetterung*?" And the conservative Freimund

[Neuendettelsau] uses the stronger term *Vergoetzung*. "The Bible does not set itself up as an authority in questions of science, astronomy, history, ethnology; but it is the authority in questions concerning salvation. He that knows this will escape the danger *der Vergoetzung des einzelnen Worts* and of mistaking the hull for the kernel." (See *Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*, Aug. 2, 1931.) And some of the moderns think they have divine authority for this use of the term bibliolatry. G. T. Ladd thinks so. "Christ does not find fault with the Jews for diligent study of their Sacred Scriptures; He does accuse them of folly and sin in *idolizing the written word* while neglecting its ideal contents of truth." (*The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, I, p. 51.) C. A. Wendell thus sums up the case for the moderns: "Bibliolatry is perhaps the finest and most exalted form of *idolatry*" (our italics), "but idolatry it is nevertheless. It is not the Bible but God Himself who says, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.' A stilted veneration for the Word betrays an inward weakness rather than a virile faith and out of it proceeds a nervous anxiety to prove the 'complete inerrancy' of the Bible 'from cover to cover.'" (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 235.)^{297) —}

297) We submit a few more statements to show that the use of this term is not exceptional but very common with the moderns. Dr. Pieper quotes from *What do Unitarians Believe?*: "We do not regard the Bible as a fetish, a verbally inspired and infallible oracle of God." (*Op. cit.*, p. 329.) And many Trinitarians agree with the Unitarians on this point. E. Lewis: "Without a doubt our fathers came very close to bibliolatry, they could make no distinction between the Word of God and the words of men by which that Word was given." (*The Faith We Declare*, p. 49.) R. F. Horton: "It is from this dangerous, and in the last resort, idolatrous, perversion of Christianity that the line of argument pursued in the foregoing pages is intended to deliver us." (*Op. cit.*, p. 407.) J. P. Smyth (he who wants Verbal Inspiration thrown to the bats and moles): "This collection of living utterances given for our use we have almost treated as a fetish for our worship. . . . The intelligent veneration for a nobly inspired Book has degenerated into a foolish reverence for an idol; the faith that should have assimilated the spirit of the Bible has become a superstitious worship of letters and words." (*Op. cit.*, p. 54.) J. S. Whale (he who wants to be "free from the bondage of the letter, the prison house of verbal infallibility") is "convinced that blind bibliolatry can be as pathetically wrong as what is called blind unbelief and that the way of obscurantism is the way of disaster" (*op. cit.*, p. 78). But why go on? Men who honestly believe that the Bible is not in all its parts God's very Word and then find other men who bow before these words and absolutely trust in them, cannot but say with S. Bulgakoff: "An exaggerated and one-sided bibliolatry treats the Word of God as a transcendent oracle. Such interpretation reminds us of the origin of bibliolatry, when a legalism of the letter of the Bible replaced, to a certain extent at least, that of the Church of Rome" (in *Revelation*, by J. Baillie and H. Martin, p. 155) and with Hans Rust (Koenigsberg): "We should like to have God's infallible Word placed in our hands directly, by means of Holy Scripture, in order to have all questions decided at once. But God willed otherwise. . . . God has kept His Church from making the Bible a revelation-idol, *sich aus der Schrift einen Offenbarungsgoetzen zu machen*" (*Vom Aergernis des Menschenworts in d. H. Schrift*, pp. 25, 30).

The moderns, it is clear, hate Verbal Inspiration. We have established that out of their own mouths. They abominate a teaching which, as they feel, makes men worship a book, makes them slaves of the letter.

They want to be free men. We heard the Eisenach Declaration of Independence: "Bound yet free! Bound to the revelation within the Scriptures taken as a whole. . . . But free with respect to particulars, free to form our opinion of the human garments in which the divine glory of the Scriptures is masked." (See THEOL. MTHLY., V, p. 6.) We heard Bishop Martensen exhorting the Christians to "maintain a relative independence over against the Scriptures." And all of the moderns, the more or less conservatives, the liberals, and the ultraliberals, have taken up the cry. J. A. W. Haas: "What the theologians call the Word of God, namely, the spiritual content of the Bible, is an authority of freedom. It is not dependent upon a prior acceptance of an infallible record or any doctrine of inspiration. . . . With this approach to infallibility" ("the claims of a mechanically infallible Bible, verbally perfect, do not hold in the light of the facts") "in the authority of divine truth we do no injury to our moral freedom." (*What Ought I to Believe*, pp. 29, 30.) H. F. Rall: "Revelation meant to them [our fathers] so many doctrines or commandments handed down. . . . Free men know only one kind of authority — that of truth and right." (*A Faith for Today*, pp. 228, 232.) R. H. Strachan (he who speaks of "slave mentality"): "The authority of which we are in quest clearly must be an authority which does not destroy our personal freedom. It must compel a humble acceptance of the will of God and also clearly recognize the autonomy of the individual personality and our responsibility for our own beliefs." (*Op. cit.*, p. 19.) H. E. Fosdick: The Gospel must be "released from literal bondage to old categories and set free to do its work in modern terms of thought. . . . The new methods of study have given us His imperishable Gospel freed from its entanglements, to be preached with a liberty, a reasonableness, an immediate application to our own age, such as no generation of preachers in the Church's history ever had the privilege of knowing before." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 261, 273.) Col. R. G. Ingersoll, discussing the "mistakes of Moses" and related matters: "It is a question, first, of intellectual liberty, and after that, a question to be settled at the bar of human reason." (*Lectures*, p. 382.) Yes, and Luther, too, belongs in this class. G. Wehrung declares: "Wir muessen mit Luther und seinem Freiheitsgeist einig bleiben, indem wir alles Schriftwort danach schaetzen, ob es das Evangelium als Evangelium rein und ungetruert zum Ausdruck bringt." (*Op. cit.*, p. 308.)

What kind of liberty are these men (excluding Luther) fight-

ing for? They claim the right to criticize and correct Scripture. They claim the right to correct Scripture by stamping certain scientific and historical statements as false — that is the coarser method; or — and that is the finer, politer method — by investing certain stories, which are of course not literally true, with a deeper significance, as being poetic descriptions of some higher truth and as bearing some profound prophetic philosophy of history. The Biblical teachings, too, were good enough for those days, but must be translated into modern categories of thought.²⁹⁸⁾ The moderns are thoroughly convinced that the Bible is full of mistakes and that many of its statements are unreliable and misleading. The mistaken views of the early Church, says Edwin Lewis, "have colored the Gospel records themselves" (*A New Heaven and a New Earth*, p. 175 f.). Why, Jesus Himself was not inerrant. That was either

298) E. H. Delk: "Higher criticism has set theology free from that tyrannous literalism and false idea of inspiration which made all attempts at the adjustment of theology with modern thought in history, science, and philosophy either impious or revolutionary. . . . No theory of verbal inspiration is any longer tenable." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1912, p. 568.) O. L. Joseph: "If we are to escape the pitfalls of barren intellectualism, we must recognize that reason and faith are the twin guides to truth. When we imprison the reason within a Chinese wall of traditionalism, we imperil the prospects of liberty." The Bible is a book "containing errors." "Are we not doing injustice to the Book when we fail to discriminate between prose and poetry, between history and fiction, between biography and allegory, between folklore and faith?" (*Ringing Realities*, pp. 93, 217.) — T. A. Kantonen: "Relying upon the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the adherents of this approach have regarded the stories of the Temptation and the Fall as mere historical narratives rather than profound prophetic philosophy of history." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, p. 211.) Did Creation actually take place as the Bible tells it? O. F. Nolde: "Pupils ought forever to accept the story itself because of literary and religious merit. . . . They may later discard the scientific import of the story." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 299.) Similarly, did the great fish swallow Jonah? The Bible does not really say so, says H. L. Willett. The romance is "perhaps intended as a symbol of Israel's engulfment and restoration" (*op. cit.*, p. 110). H. E. Fosdick: "When one has said all that needs to be said about the new views of the Bible, . . . in particular about the obvious changes in mental categories between Biblical times and our own, how empty is the issue of it all if it does not liberate our mind from handicaps and summon our souls the more clearly to the spiritual adventures for which the Scriptures stand! . . . To be a Bible Christian, must we think, as some seem to suppose, that a fish swallowed a man, or that the sun and moon stood still at Joshua's command, or that God sent she-bears to eat up children who were rude to a prophet? . . . To be a Bible Christian is a more significant affair than such bald literalism suggests." (*Op. cit.*, p. 181.) You must translate what the Bible literally teaches into modern categories of thought! "Decode the abiding meanings of Scripture from outgrown phraseology!" The Bible teaching on "the resurrection of the flesh" means nothing more than "the immortality of the soul" (*op. cit.*, pp. 123, 129). Yes, indeed, says Edwin Lewis, we may well regard the resurrection narratives "not as literal statements of fact but as a more or less pictorial effort on the part of the earlier Christian community to account for their experience of Christ." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., IV, p. 758.)

because He was a mere man or because of His self-limitation. (See third installment of this series.)²⁹⁹ So the moderns claim it as their God-given right to subject the Bible to a careful scrutiny, to separate truth from error, to discriminate between the outworn forms of thought and the things of abiding value. Do not fail "to discriminate between prose and poetry," etc., says O. L. Joseph. "Christian liberty," says M. G. G. Sherer, "knows how to distinguish between Scripture and Scripture, between the chaff and the wheat." Did not A. Schweizer tell us long ago that the Bible is not a paper pope, that the gold it contains is mixed with dross, and that it is the business of the Christian spirit to smelt the ore and obtain the pure gold?

And when we protest that the statements, stories, and teachings of the Bible must be taken at their face value, they indignantly reply: Away with these old exegetical and dogmatical fetters! Our minds have been liberated from these handicaps. (Fosdick.) "Do not foreclose by an appeal to authority the whole line of detailed investigation!" (W. Sanday, *The Oracles of God*, p. 102.) "Let it be said in all seriousness that Lutheran exegesis will be seriously handicapped unless it abandons once and for all the unpsychological and mechanical theories of inspiration and unhistorical views of verbal inerrancy," etc. (T. A. Kantonen, "The Canned Goods of Past Theology," in the *Lutheran*, Dec. 12, 1935, to Jan. 2, 1936.) Reviewing Dr. Lenski's "Interpretation of St. John's Gospel," the *Luth. Church Quart.*, Oct., 1932, says: "While the author would count his verbal-inspiration theory the bulwark of his treatment, as a matter of fact it is its strait jacket." (See the *Pastor's Monthly*, 1935, p. 262.) — It is no caricature when the mind of the moderns is thus described in *Christian Dogmatics* (Dr. J. T. Mueller), p. 114: "Chafing under the divine restraint, 1 Pet. 4:11, the exponents of modern theology allege that belief in the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture results in 'intellectualism,' 'biblicism,' 'letter service,' 'the constraint of the free spirit of investigation,' 'the failure to find new religious truths,' 'the inability of the theologian to accommodate himself to present-day religious thought,' and the like." J. M. Haldeman: "The truth is (according to Modernism) man of today has altogether outgrown the Bible. It may have done for the infant state of the human mind, but to put the rising generation

299) Fosdick's view, as presented in the *Christian Century*, Dec. 6, 1936: "There were theologians who justified the crusade, but tried not to lean too heavily upon Jesus for Scriptural support. Dr. Fosdick, for instance, frankly said: 'The Master never faced in His own experience . . . a national problem such as Belgium met when the Prussians crossed the border. . . . The fact is that Jesus did not directly face our modern question about war; they were not His problems, and to press a legalistic interpretation of special texts as though they were, is a misuse of the Gospel.'

under its *clamps and chains* would be to restrict the mental growth of the human race." (*A King's Penknife*, p. 108.)

The Bible has lost its rights. One of these is the right to have its statements understood and accepted *literally*, unless otherwise indicated. The moderns recognize this right in the case of a reputable human writing, but in the case of the Bible they have assumed the right to depart from the literal sense whenever it suits them. And they heap scorn and obloquy on those who insist on abiding by the literal sense in spite of the protest of "science" and modern thought. They call these men "dogmatists and literalists" (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 153). N. R. Best thinks he has dealt them a deathblow when he declares: "Their theory obliges them to hold that every Bible verse in its simple literal sense is an explicitly exact statement of fact." (*Inspiration*, p. 118.) The reader will understand the import of this statement when he reads the preceding paragraph which unfolds the thesis: "Utterly vain is it to talk of not employing human reason on the Bible." Georgia Harkness speaks on the subject of literalism thus: "The revolt against Fundamentalism has centered upon the other great pitfall of reliance on the authority of the Bible, namely, the disregard of historical and scientific fact that ensues from belief in its literal inspiration. The battle is not yet won. Like the poor, literalism is always with us." (*The Faith by Which the Church Lives*, p. 57.) The moderns claim the right to nullify any statement or doctrine of Scripture by simply pronouncing the magic word "literalism." Do you believe that the bears ate the children? Fosdick tells you: "That is bald literalism" and he glories in the fact of our "release from literalism." (*Op. cit.*, p. 182.) Do you accept the Bible teaching on the Fall and original sin? R. Niebuhr will tell you: "Christian theology has found it difficult to refute the rationalistic rejection of the myth of the Fall without falling into the literalistic error of insisting upon the Fall as an historical event. One of the consequences of this literalism," etc. "The confusion revealed in the debate between Pelagians and Augustinians has been further aggravated by the literalism of the Augustinians." (*The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, pp. 260, 267.) Do you believe in the Real Presence? Bishop Gore has told you: That is "purest literalism"; you have permitted Luther to put this bridle on you. Is Jesus Christ true God? O. J. Baab refuses to "ascribe deity to Jesus" and then looks with derision on us: "No wonder the literalistic interpreters of the Bible are stirred to indignant and vehement protest." (*Jesus Christ Our Lord*, pp. 11, 41.) Do you believe in Verbal Inspiration? Scripture plainly says that all the words of Scripture were inspired, 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13. Go to, say the moderns, that is a literalistic interpretation and cannot stand. *The Lutheran*, Feb. 30, 1936,

reviewing Lenski's *Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians*, passes the verdict: "The verbal literalism of the author's view of inspiration is hardly congenial in the atmosphere of most present-day theological schools, even of our conservative Lutheran institutions." Lenski had written on 1 Cor. 2:13: "The very words which the apostles speak are taught them by the Spirit. He is their teacher even as to the 'words.' This is proof positive for Verbal Inspiration," etc. Yes, say the moderns, taken literally, this verse proves Verbal Inspiration; but we are not literalists. We refuse to be bound by the letter with respect to this teaching or any other teaching and statement of Scripture. Do not expect us to submit to any kind of legalistic constraint.—Note that the moderns use "legalistic" and "literalistic" as synonyms. *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 279: "The Bible must never become a codex. Otherwise we have bibliolatry. . . . The Fundamentalists make it *literalistic and legalistic* in a Calvinistic manner and forget that the letter killeth but the Spirit maketh alive." The hue and cry is: "The enslaving legalism of the letter!" We will not have this "fetter," this "handicap," these "clamps and chains," this "strait jacket" of literalism put on us.

The moderns certainly do not like this thing "literalism." They make it responsible for all sorts of woes and evils. It destroys, for instance, belief in the Scriptures and keeps in spiritual death. G. L. Raymond: "This statement — 2 Cor. 3:6: 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life' — the history of the world has proved to be true. As a fact, the letter has killed. It has done this both because the theory of literalism, so conscientiously advocated, has been the death of any form of belief in the Scriptures on the part of large numbers who could not fully ignore what to them have seemed to be discrepancies, and also because the truth, when considered only in itself, so far as it has been supposed to be identical with a form or a formula, has failed to stimulate to activity, and so to spiritual life." (*Op. cit.*, p. 193 f.)

The moderns do not want to be tied down to the letter. They want the freedom of the Spirit. "Like the poor, literalism is always with us. . . . Literalize the Bible and you get weird nonsense. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible has been cheapened, perverted, flattened out to a dull dead level, by those who find their authority in the letter and not the spirit." (Harkness.) "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life!" And what is this "spirit" which gives the right understanding of Scripture or what is the "spiritual content" of Scripture which supersedes the literal form? The Unitarians identify this "spirit" with reason. Let the Unitarian W. E. Channing repeat his statement: "The Bible expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths which

observation and experience furnish on these topics. . . . We feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to look beyond the letter to the spirit" (our italics), "to make use of what is known for explaining what is difficult and for discovering new truths." (*Works of W. E. Channing*, p. 368 ff.)³⁰⁰ The more conservative moderns will not directly identify the "spirit" with reason. But they are rather hazy in defining this term of theirs. The best they can do is to tell us that it is "something in us," "the best in us," our "moral sense," our "spiritual understanding," etc. J. M. Gibson: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. . . . There must be some soul in the person reading it to put the color in from suggestions of it which it is possible to give." (*Op. cit.*, p. 235.) Hazy? C. H. Dodd: "The criterion lies within ourselves, in the response of our own spirit to the spirit that utters itself in the Scriptures." (*The Authority of the Bible*, p. 296.) Call it "spirit complex" and let it go at that. That is the term to which attention is called by Erik Floreen in his critique of Aulén's theology. "It would be legalistic [according to Aulén] to ground our faith on an outward authority, as on that of the Bible. . . . It is no vital matter to Dr. Aulén whether his teachings always agree with the Bible. He holds that faith owes its existence and growth to a 'spirit complex' controlled by the glorified Christ. This spirit complex he identifies with the Church." (See *The Luth. Companion*, Feb. 9, 1939.) And what is the "spiritual content" of the Bible which appeals to the "spirit complex" of the Church, the spiritual sense of the theologians?³⁰¹ Nobody has ever told us. We know that all the content of the Bible is spiritual. If that is not true, if only certain portions have spiritual value, we ought to know how to identify these portions. The moderns have never told us how to do that. They have never drawn up a precise list of the spiritual sections. Or rather, they have told us how to identify these portions: your "spirit" will pick them out. If your spirit

300) Similar statements. N. R. Best: "The contributions made to the Bible's contents by its prophets, its evangelists, its apostles, and above all by its immortal Messiah are literature of a quality shiningly beyond all categories of 'the letter,' which Paul complained of as 'killing' the spirituality of believers. They all are instead instinct with the spirit which 'giveth life.' Utterly vain then is it to talk of not employing human reason on the Bible." (*Op. cit.*, p. 117.) H. L. Willlett: "It is inevitable that one who studies the Scriptures should bring every statement and precept to the bar of his own sense of right and judge it by that standard. . . . The Bible's overwhelming vindication, its right to the world's reverence, are found in its appeal to the intelligent and sensitive spirit." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 291, 299.)

301) V. Ferm: "The authority of the Sacred writings is no longer found in 'the letter' and sustained by some artificial theory of divine inspiration but in the appeal of its spiritual content." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 279.)

responds to a certain section of the Bible, you can be sure that in that section the Spirit utters itself. (Dodd.) And that means that so much of the Bible is spiritual as the individual or the "Church" chooses to call spiritual.³⁰²⁾ And that means that the moderns are fighting for the freedom from Scripture. Their "spiritual liberty," the "liberty of the evangelical spirit against the enslaving legalism of the letter," is a revolt against the authority of Scripture in favor of the authority of man. They tell us very plainly that in fighting against this legalistic Verbal Inspiration, this legalism of the letter, their interest is to establish the authority of man over Scripture. What did C. H. Dodd say? "The criterion lies *within ourselves*, in the response of our spirit to the Spirit that utters itself in the Scriptures." Listen to what H. F. Rall says on this point: "Paul had not the faintest idea that centuries later theologians would be building up their theories on this phrase or that sentence of his letters. . . . There are two kinds of authority. One is external, compulsive. It does not ask for understanding or conviction, but simply submission. The other is inner, moral, spiritual; it asks obedience, but the obedience must root in conviction and come as free choice. The former belongs to subjects, the latter to sons. Free men know only one kind of authority—that of truth and right." (*A Faith for Today*, pp. 229, 232.) And H. L. Willett uses very plain language: "The authority present in the Biblical record does not inhere in the Book as such nor in any particular portion of it. But rather it is found in the appeal which the Scripture as a whole makes to the moral sense within humanity, and in particular the urgency of the appeal made by certain parts of the record, notably the Gospels and the Pauline epistles. . . . The Book asks nothing for itself in the way of sovereignty over the minds of men. But it exercises that power by the sheer force of its appeal to all that is best within them. Its authority is not formal or arbitrary. It consists rather in the outreaching of the

302) That is Rudelbach's diagnosis of the case. "Wie spaeter die Vernuenftler, so hatten zu jener Zeit die Paepstler vor allem den Spruch Pauli aufgegriffen, 'Der Buchstabe toetet, aber der Geist macht lebendig,' und mit der offenen Missdeutung, als ob der Apostel hier von zweierlei Schriftsinn, dem *buchstaebischen* und dem *geistlichen*, rede, verbanden sie die kecke Zumutung, dass die Schrift sich eben nach ihrem Geiste sollte wenden und drehen lassen. Trefflich fuehrt unser Luther wider Emser aus . . . , die Schrift leide ueberhaupt ein solches Spalten des Buchstabens und Geistes nicht" (*Zeitsch. f. d. ges. luth. Theologie*, 1840, zweites Quartalheft, p. 4). Nach *ihrem* Geist soll die Schrift sich wenden und drehen lassen! That in Scripture is spiritual which finds a response in your spirit, and when your spirit complex changes, that part of Scripture loses its spiritual content! — Here you have, by the way, the pedigree of the slogan "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life." The moderns got it from the Unitarians; the Unitarians got it from the rationalists (Vernuenftler); and the rationalists got it from the papists.

spirit of God in the men who wrote its various parts to the souls of those who study it." (*Op. cit.*, p. 292.) — Luther addressed the following to the spirituals of his day, but it describes the mind of the moderns exactly: "Their conceit sets up the rule that you must forget about these words 'This is My body' and study the matter spiritually. . . . Here you have a fine rule, which will guide you into all truth far better than the Holy Spirit can do it; *viz.*, wherever Holy Scripture stands in the way of your own opinion and conceit, forget about Scripture and follow your own conceit, and you will get along wonderfully. . . . Gott muss und soll sich gefangen geben, dass er seine Worte nicht setze, wann und wo er will, sondern wo und wie es ihm dieser Geist stimmt. . . . Der Geist hat abermal frei und schoen gewonnen." (XX:1022 f.)

Another word on the conceit of these spirituals. They look with infinite contempt on us poor Bible-Christians, who stick to the words as written and simply repeat them. They despise our theological method as "mechanical," tell us that we have "a metallic, inert, or mechanical mind"; that our "viewpoint is wooden, rigid, and narrow"; that our dependence upon a book is "a dead and artificial thing." When we refuse to depart from the literal sense of the words "This is My body," E. S. Jones sneers: "How wooden and blocked off we've made Him!" Sticking to Verbal Inspiration, sticking to the text, involves "a loss of intellectual vitality." "Schlendrianmaessige Reproduktion!" "Mechanische und hoelzerne Vorstellung." "Die orthodoxe, versteinerte Verbalinspirationslehre." "Dogmatische Verknoecherung des Offenbarungsgedankens." "Es war der Fehler der Verbalinspiration, dass sie keine Aufgaben stellte, sondern die Hinnahme einer fertiggestellten Aufgabe verlangte." (B. Steffen.) Verbal Inspiration makes theology too easy. Hofmann told the verbal-inspirationist Philippi: "Mag immerhin fortschlafen, wer es gern bequem hat." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 147.) We need men, say the moderns, who are able to enrich the Bible with the results of their spiritual labors and experiences, who will soar on the pinions of the spirit through the regions of heaven and discover new and better truths, who "liberate their minds from handicaps and summon their souls the more clearly to the spiritual adventures for which the Scriptures stand" (Fosdick). — The moderns will not have the holy writers degraded to mere machines and therefore denounce the mechanical (verbal) theory of inspiration. And they will not have themselves degraded to mere machines and therefore denounce the legalistic (verbal) theory of inspiration.

In the bill of rights set up by the moderns great stress is laid upon the freedom of doctrine. It would be legalistic to bind men to the doctrinal statements of the Bible, not to permit the

Church to develop the doctrine according to the new light and understanding which the passing centuries gave her. You must not suppress the spirit, but let it go adventuring in the realm of doctrine. (Fosdick.) The doctrines set down in the Bible need revision and re-statement, for have not the apostles occasionally fallen into doctrinal error? Christ Himself is not altogether reliable. He did not know, said Fosdick, present conditions. And, more generally: "The demand even for an infallible Christ, in the sense that He reveals to us a special body of truth, beyond the reach of inquiry or intellectual reconstruction, . . . is simply to deny that the idea of evolution is applicable to the Christian faith." (R. H. Strachan, *op. cit.*, p. 199.) That means that Christ did not set down the doctrine in its final form. The Bible statements are merely "suggestive" (Raymond), or, as R. W. Nelson puts it: "The Bible is an inspired and inspiring source book, a gold mine of *initial data*, concerning God's plan of life for men" (*Christendom*, IV, p. 410). Develop these initial data; there are truths hidden there of which the apostles never dreamed. W. A. Brown: "Generation after generation has found the best of itself reflected in its pages and has discovered meanings in its teachings of which its authors never dreamed. . . . The Bible is a compendium of simple principles capable of indefinite application and therefore needing continual reinterpretation in the light of expanding experience." (*A Creed for Free Men*, pp. 227, 230.) In the light of expanding experience! "Much water has passed under the bridge since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," says V. Ferm (*op. cit.*, p. 279), and much more, say others, since the first century. Therefore we must "make readjustments with the findings of the best Biblical scholarship and interpretation, with the best recent scholarship" (Ferm). The doctrines cannot stand as they were "once delivered to the saints." They sorely need reinterpretation, rephrasing (and that is a polite way of saying that they need to be changed, abolished, turned into something else). Fosdick: "What is permanent in Christianity is not mental frameworks but abiding experiences that phrase and rephrase themselves in successive generations' ways of thinking." (*Op. cit.*, p. 103.) And, best of all, Scripture itself demands this progress, this freedom of doctrine. "The idea of a revelation confined to the writings cannot be said to be the idea of those Sacred Writings themselves." (Horton, *op. cit.*, p. 16.) Paul never intended to set down a final system of truth.³⁰³)

303) Fosdick says so. We read in the *Lutheran*, Jan. 15, 1931: "He Kept the Faith." On Jan. 4 we 'listened in' to hear Dr. Fosdick's radio sermon. And when the text, 'He kept the faith,' issued from the transmitter, we were curious to know what the famous 'modernist' would make of it. What he did was to expound the theory that the

There is no finality in doctrine — that is the Declaration of Independence proclaimed by the moderns. The truth is not "final and fixed." It would be a crime against intellectual and spiritual freedom to keep men from developing the saving doctrine. It would result in intellectual stagnation. Said Col. Ingersoll: "Whoever has quit growing, he is orthodox, whether in art, politics, religion, philosophy — no matter what. Whoever thinks he has found it all out, he is orthodox. Orthodoxy is that which rots, and heresy is that which grows forever. Orthodoxy is the night of the past, full of the darkness of superstition, and heresy is the eternal coming day, the light of which strikes the grand foreheads of the intellectual pioneers of the world." (*Op. cit.*, p. 314.)³⁰⁴⁾

And so the moderns have assumed the right to produce new doctrines, necessary for salvation. The conservatives insist upon this right as strenuously as the liberals. Hofmann contended that

great apostle's proudly cherished fidelity consisted in an ability to look forward and not chain himself to what was past. We were told that the faith he kept was not that of his youth nor of the part of his life when he was a Pharisee nor of the period when he wrote to the Thessalonians."

304) Christian theologians say: "Die orthodoxe, versteinerte Verbalinspirationslehre." H. Kraemer speaks of "the clumsy form of the literal inerrancy of the document in which God's revelation is told" and of "the justified revolt of the human spirit against the intellectual bondage caused by the petrification of Christian truth" (*The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, pp. 10, 218). M. Maryosip: "The idea . . . that revelation is to be conceived in terms of words, texts, and even books, . . . the dogma of a verbal inspiration, . . . has paralyzed the intellect of those who have adopted it, as every mechanical conception of the truth must do." (*Why I Believe the Bible*, p. 112 f.) The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 348 ff., speaking of "the tyranny of words," declares that, "when we deal with these great New Testament terms and ideas, we deal not with pieces of a system of thought which can be put together to form some original divinely given theology. . . . In the past, theologians have been far too sensitive to orthodoxy and heresy." In a book review the *Lutheran*, May 26, 1927, complains that "to him [the author] every sentence of the Bible is absolutely true in every detail. The truth, historical, scientific, as well as religious, is final and fixed." And that is "so wooden and rigid and narrow." Fosdick: No unanimous system of truth in the Bible! (*Op. cit.*, p. 30.) C. S. Macfarland: "Christian revelation is not confined to a closed canon, to a stereotyped letter, or a strictly defined confession." (*Chr. Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, p. 27.) *The Living Church*, March 9, 1938, complains that "the Roman Church is doctrinally immobilized by its dogma of the inerrancy of Scripture." *The Christian Century*, Feb. 10, 1937, declares "that in the New Testament there is no unalterable doctrine which embraces the whole scheme of Christian thought. . . . The epistles are not contributions to a doctrinal system which shall be valid to all eternity." . . . The Lutherans should be paged and told about it." The moderns do not want to be kept in a prison house, and they do not want God to be kept a prisoner. Says G. A. Buttrick: "How could God, so radiant and vital in His own life, be imprisoned in the past? And what is this doctrine of an inerrant Book but the assertion that God spoke then and cannot speak now, the avowal that the Everliving is the captive of antiquity?" (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., XII, p. 223.)

it is the business of the theologian "die alte Wahrheit auf neue Weise zu lehren und sie, gehorsam der Fuehrung des Geistes Gottes, zu *mehren*." P. Althaus, who quotes and approves this principle (see *Schrift und Bekenntnis*, July, 1930, p. 123), is busy applying it with all the rest of the moderns. He says: "Scripture is not an absolutely infallible manual of doctrine. . . . Our doctrine of justification is not simply a repetition of the New Testament doctrine and our eschatology is not simply a repetition of the Biblical doctrine but has its own form." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 61, 74.) And the liberals are certainly not going to be outdone by the conservatives. The Unitarian Channing told us that he is for "looking beyond the letter to the spirit and for discovering new truths." E. H. Delk gets violent on this subject: "To deny that modern thought has any new truths to offer is to deny the presence and leadership of God. It is a kind of atheism." (*Op. cit.*, p. 554.) — That is freedom with a vengeance! The real freedom of the spirit!³⁰⁵⁾ Dr. Pieper says on our present subject: "Today we have to call particular attention to the fact that Paul insists on the perfection and completeness of the apostolic doctrine also over against such teachers as find it necessary to supplement and augment the doctrine of Christ on the pretense of a higher philosophical knowledge and a higher spirituality." (*Op.cit.*, p. 148.)

Finally, the moderns claim the right, in the interest of freedom to operate with the "Word of God." The Word of God, not the word of Scripture, is what counts. What is this "Word" of the moderns? Nobody knows exactly. The moderns know for sure what it is not. It is not Scripture. Dr. C. M. Jacobs: "With all the emphasis which we lay upon the Scriptures we do not identify them with the Word of God. . . . For this view of the Word of God and this view of the Scriptures the Philadelphia Seminary has stood, and for them it will continue, by God's help, to stand." "In Lutheran theology, the two are not equated." (*The Lutheran*, Jan. 12, 1933.) *Luth Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 195: "What results is a legalistic and an atomistic conception of the Scriptures as the Word of God, far more congenial to Calvinism than to Lutheranism. Calvinism identified the Word of God with the words of Scripture." E. Lewis agrees with that. We heard his statement: "Without a doubt our fathers came very close to Bibliolatry; they could make no distinc-

305) Hofmann: "Following the promptings of the spirit," G. Aulén: "Ein Gott, von dessen Offenbarung nur als in der Vergangenheit geschehen gesprochen werden kann, ist kein lebendiger Gott. Man will Ernst machen mit dem Charakter des christlichen Gottesglaubens, dass er *Geistglaube* ist, und laesst den 'Geist' den immer gegenwaertigen Charakter der Gottesoffenbarung sein. Dieser Gedanke tritt . . . in Gegensatz zu dem alten Biblizismus und seiner Tendenz, die Gottesoffenbarung in und mit der Bibel 'abgeschlossen' sein zu lassen." (*Op. cit.*, p. 386.)

tion between the Word of God and the words of men by which that Word was given." H. L. Willett finds "portions in the Bible which are worthy to be called the Word of God to man." But "it is unfortunate that the Bible has been called the Word of God" (*op. cit.*, p. 289). Yes, and "it would be unchristian," says W. Herrmann, "if it meant the acknowledgment of any chance sentence of the Scriptures as God's Word" (*op. cit.*, p. 58). To be sure, "Scripture contains the Word of God," Willett goes on to say; and the *Luth. Church Quart.* and all the rest, the Unitarians, too, subscribe to that. But that is as far as they will go. They refuse to operate with the words of Scripture as such. They want to operate with the "Word of God."

Then tell us what this Word of God is. We get various answers. Some say it is God's revelation in history, what God did for man's salvation, "the succession of events in which and through which God made Himself known to men." — When God tells men what His actions mean, you can use the term "Word of God." But you cannot call the actions God's Word.³⁰⁶⁾ — Very well, others say, but God did explain these actions in Scripture: However — they add at once — you cannot find this meaning, the Word of God, in all the words of Scripture. Only certain portions of Scripture are the Word of God. Which are these portions? Dr. Haas told us: "What the theologians call the Word of God, namely, the *spiritual content* of the Bible, is an authority of freedom." (In *What is Lutheranism?*, p. 176, he says: "There must be a clear distinction kept in mind between the Word of God and the Bible. . . . The Bible is the Word of God because it contains the Word of God," because of its "spiritual content.") Others, somewhat more specific, say the Word of God contained in the Bible is the Gospel; others, more indefinitely, the "Living Christ" (*Luth. Church Quart.*), the "Living Word" (E. Lewis). Now, we are willing, very willing to call the Gospel the Word of God. But we also call the Law God's Word. And the moderns have never given us a reason why only the Gospel should be God's Word, not the Law. The Law was certainly spoken by God. The distinction the moderns make here is utterly arbitrary, not based in Scripture nor in common sense. Nor have the moderns ever

306) *The Christian Century* is not liberal enough to identify actions with words. "The concept 'Word of God' was one of the most difficult upon which the conference (World Conference, Edinburgh) expended its effort. Happily there appeared to be no literalists in the conference. . . . The Word itself — what is it? 'It is ever living and dynamic and inseparable from God's activity. God reveals Himself to us by what He does.' I like this immensely; only I wish it had not been made obscure by the far-fetched necessity of connecting it up with the concept 'Word.' . . . It overstrains the meaning of 'Word' to make it bear the meaning of action." (Sept. 8, 1937, p. 1096.)

told us just how much of the Bible is Gospel. Nor will they tell us which portions of the Bible have a spiritual content. We believe that everything in the Bible has a spiritual purpose. And we are waiting for the moderns to publish a list enumerating the spiritual portions.

And if we agree with the moderns that this and that section has a spiritual content, may we call these sections the Word of God? Oh, no, they tell us; these bare words, these words written by John or Paul, are not in themselves God's Word. You must separate the wheat from the chaff, distinguish between the form (the words) and the content of John 3:16 and Rom. 3:28 and find out, with the help of your Christian consciousness, etc., what the spiritual content is: that part of John 3:16 you have a right to call the "Word of God." "To us the 'Word of God' is the validly spiritual content which rises unmistakably in Scriptural utterances and in the pronouncements of Christlike Seers." (V. Ferm, in *What is Lutheranism?* p. 294.) But be sure you do not make a mistake. You would be mistaken if you relied on the bare words.

Perhaps K. Barth and his followers can clear up the matter. Barth teaches first, with the others, that not everything in the Bible is God's Word. "The Word of God is within the Bible." There is "a margin where the Bible ceases to be Bible" (*The Word of God and the Word of Man*, pp. 43, 65). There are places in the Bible "wo die Bibel aufhoert, Bibel zu sein" (*Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, p. 77). Then what about those portions which really are Bible? Barth and his followers tell us, secondly, that not even these portions are absolutely God's Word. They *become* God's Word and they *cease to be* God's Word, depending on something else. Barth's classical phrase is: That is God's Word, "das mich findet." Again: "We said of church proclamation that from time to time it must become God's Word. And we said the same of the Bible, that it must from time to time become God's Word . . . in virtue of divine decision." (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 131 f. See H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 161.) Barth actually teaches that these Gospel passages *are* not the Word of God but only *become* the Word of God under certain circumstances. One of his followers, Adolf Keller, assures us that that is Barthianism's definition of the Word of God in the Bible. "When we call the Bible the Word of God, we are not referring to the human interpretation of God's Word, but only to that act of faith by which we believe in the God who speaks in the Bible wherever, whenever, and through whatever words He will." (*Religion and Revelation*. See further CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., VI, p. 715.) So, then, the Barthian "Word of God" is not something on which you can lay your finger. A lot of psychological operations are necessary in order to make

it assume some kind of form, and the form assumed ever remains a hazy, evanescent phantasm. In the words of Dr. D. S. Clark: "Briefly stated, the new cult teaches that the Word of God is the spiritual impression or influence made by the agency of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the man as he reads the Scripture. It is sort of an invisible, intangible, indefinite, psychological something which grips the mind while it uses the Scriptures as means or medium of instruction and inspiration. It is this that is put in the place of the written Word." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., IX, p. 779.) And Barth has many mates and followers. The leading theologians of today are asking us to throw the idea that the written word of Scripture is the Word of God to the moles and bats and to operate with a "Word of God" which has no definite and no lasting form.³⁰⁷⁾

And making the "Word of God" still more indefinite, they tell us that it is found and heard also outside of Scripture. In some crisis these men will say: "Wir bekamen ein Wort Gottes." "Das

307) A few examples: W. Herrmann: "At any moment of our inner development, therefore, we can point to some parts of the Scriptures which do not have for us the significance of the Word of God. But this does not rule out the possibility that these very parts of the Scriptures may have possessed that significance for other people or may still possess it, or that they may one day possess it for us as well." (*Op. cit.*, p. 59.) G. Harkness: "Some parts of the Bible have more of the voice of God than others. . . . Read in faith, the Bible is the Word of God." (*Op. cit.*, p. 70 f.) The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, p. 260 ff.: "Seekers for authority in Scripture cannot find it in isolated portions and texts of the Bible. . . . Finality is found in the final analysis, within the soul. . . . Here the teacher of religion finds his authority. He speaks with confidence not because he quotes a scripture, but because the Word of God has found him." C. Stange: "Der Buchstabe der Schrift ist erst dann Gottes Wort, wenn er in der Wirkung auf uns lebendig geworden ist." (*Op. cit.*, p. 193.) Cryptic phrases used by Professor Homrighausen: "Far from being a mere mechanical phonograph record, the Bible is rather a *living interpretation*" (italics in original). "We must remember that the Word of God is *God Himself*, disclosed, disclosed *first* in real historical events. . . . The Holy Spirit makes that Word real and contemporaneous to us through the Bible. We do not choose the Word of God. The Word of God *chooses* you and me. . . . The Word is its own criterion." (In the *Presbyterian*, March 24, 1938.) — And this is not a "new cult." Barth popularized it, but before him Coleridge and his school, which developed into the Broad Churchism of England, "held that to be the Word of God which finds a man or comes home to him with a feeling of light and warmth. Thus it exalted in a more or less capricious way what appealed to man as a detached unit by himself." (The *Presby. Guardian*, June, 1939.) And before that, Zwingli had the same idea. "Das Wort, das gehoert wird, ist keineswegs das Wort, durch welches wir glauben; denn wenn das gelesene oder gehoerte Wort glaeubig machen koennte, wuerden wir all' glaeubig sein. Das Glaubenswort haftet im Geiste der Glaeubigen, es selbst wird von niemand gerichtet, sondern von ihm wird das aeussere Wort gerichtet." Oekolompad: "Was die aeusserlichen Worte ueber das Getoen haben, das haben sie von dem innerlichen Gemuete und vom innerlichen Worte." (See Rudelbach, *Ref. Luthert u. Union*, p. 118 f.)

jetzt geschehende Wort Gottes in der Barmer Synode." "The claim has already been advanced that the Barmen Confession was inspired by the Holy Spirit and is consequently a Word of God." (H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 169.) Dr. Moffatt believes that "the revelation is communicated afresh to successive generations." (See CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., XII, p. 304.) And God gives His Word not only by means of Scripture but also through the *viva vox* of the Church.—Now, what is the "Word of God?" Is it the *Schriftganze*? That would not help us much, since nobody has yet told us exactly what the "whole of Scripture" comprises. And the confusion grows when we find that while some moderns somehow identify the two concepts,³⁰⁸⁾ others tell us the "Word of God" also comprises the continuing revelation, and just what that is they will not tell us. If the *Schriftganze* is hazy, indefinite, and absolutely unreliable, the "Word of God" is doubly hazy, indefinite, and absolutely unreliable.

But the moderns claim the right to operate with, and ask men to base their faith on, this "Word of God." They will not operate with the literal word of Scripture. That would be legalistic. They want the right to pick and choose, to decide for themselves what in Scripture is really worth while. They demand that in the name of spiritual liberty. P. Althaus: "Wir sind in dem Hoeren auf das Wort Gottes in dem biblischen Wort von diesem letzteren als Menschenworte frei"—submitting to the Word of God in the Biblical word, we are not bound by the Biblical word as such, for that is the word of man. (*Op. cit.*, p. 61.) E. Schaeder: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible word. Through this sifting process it gets the Word of God." (*Theozentrische Theologie*, II, p. 69.) G. T. Ladd: "The Christian consciousness, the consciousness of the Church, discerns the Word of God" contained in the Bible. (*Op. cit.*, p. 453.) Recall Dr. Flack's statement: "The Word of God is greater than the Book. . . . The standard by which all dogmas and teachers are to be judged is not the Scriptures standing utterly alone, but the Word of God attested and authenticated in the Spirit-filled life of the early Church and projected through the centuries from faith to faith in the corporate mind of the true Church." (*The Lutheran*, Sept. 24 and Oct. 1, 1936.) "Faith refuses," says G. Weh-

308) E. Lewis: "The question is whether out of the New Testament in its entirety we can gather the Word of God. Precisely this is what the Church in its collective life has been able to do." (*Op. cit.*, p. 151.) C. H. Dodd tells us "something about the way in which the Bible as a whole may become the 'Word of God' to us" (*op. cit.*, p. 294). *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1936, p. 246: "The Bible is the Word of God not because of any theoretical explanation of the method of divine inspiration, but because as one connected harmonious, authentic recorded whole the sacred Scriptures testify of Christ."

rung, "to make a legalistic use of individual passages or of the entire Scripture. . . . We must be in accord with Luther and his spirit of freedom and apply this touchstone to every word of Scripture: does it give expression to the Gospel as Gospel, the pure and clear Gospel?" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 306, 308.)

This, then, is the charter of liberty proclaimed by the moderns: Having renounced the tyranny of the words of Scripture as such, we vow allegiance to the Word of God contained in them; and our Christian consciousness shall tell us how much of Scripture is the Word of God to which we can submit.

We are asked to come in under this charter of liberty. We cannot do so, for three reasons.

TH. ENGELDER

(To be continued)



Sermon Study on Rom. 14:1-9

Eisenach Epistle for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

In the first part of the Epistle to the Romans, chaps. 1-11, Paul sets forth the central doctrine of justification by faith in the vicarious atonement of Christ. In the second part, chaps. 12-16, from which our epistle lesson is taken, the Apostle indicates in the form of a lengthy exhortation the lessons for our Christian life and conduct implied in this glorious doctrine. In the paragraph preceding our epistle, he had urged all Christians, particularly in view of the close approach of the Last Day, to cast off the works of darkness, to put on the armor of light, and not to make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof, Rom. 13:12, 14. This latter exhortation is well explained by Chrysostom, "As the Apostle forbade not drinking, but drunkenness, not marrying, but chambering, so he does not forbid providing for the flesh, but providing for it to the point of stirring up desires, as by going beyond one's actual needs." And Theophylact says, "Unto health, but not unto wantonness, unbridled lust, provide for the flesh."

Now, how far may one go in providing for one's flesh? Where does the God-pleasing provision end? Where does catering to the lusts of the flesh begin? Just what may we do, and what must we avoid to walk honestly? Since the Apostle warns so persistently against excesses in eating and drinking, just where are the limits to be drawn? These were the questions engaging the minds of the Christians at Rome, and the conflicting views threatened to cause disturbance and eventually disruption within the congregation. The Apostle enters at length upon this problem; teaches his readers the correct attitude toward matters of indif-

ference, toward such things as God has left to the choice of the individual Christian; points out to them the proper spirit which should govern them in their attitude toward those holding different views from their own, and warns them against some specific dangers threatening each of the two parties.

In chap. 14 Paul takes up in particular the problem of meat or vegetable diet and addresses both parties holding different opinions. In chap. 15 he addresses particularly the strong and points out their duty in general to exercise their strength in bearing the weak and to strive for mutual edification, rather than indulge in petty bickerings and faultfindings.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation." Rom. 14:1. The article does not single out an individual; it designates a class, as is evident from the entire context. The congregation at Rome did not consist of one individual who ate meat and a second individual who chose a vegetable diet. The article here is clearly generic, pointing to a class without specifying any one individual. Weak, *ἀσθενῶντα*, lacking strength. The present participle designates not a momentary weakness, but a continuing state. The Apostle does not speak of physical but of spiritual weakness, a weakness in "the faith," τῇ πίστει, dative of relation. Faith is not the objective faith, the faith which is believed, the Christian doctrine. V. 2, where the verb "believeth" is used, and the noun πίστις in vv. 22, 23 rule out the idea of objective faith. Moreover, in this chapter the Apostle does not speak of a weakness in doctrine, but of a weakness manifesting itself in the area of Christian life and conduct due to a failure on the part of the weak Christian to realize the full implication for his conduct of doctrines well known to him. Faith, therefore, here retains its usual sense of subjective faith. A Christian's faith is essentially conviction, assurance; a conviction based not on his own reasoning or experience or desire, but firmly founded on and rooted in God's Word, in the promises of Scripture. "Mere subjective moral conviction, however steadfast in character, without this objective basis is still to be designated as ἀπίστα, unbelief, not πίστις." (Philippi.) The most precious promise and the only saving promise is the Gospel truth, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." To accept this Gospel, to put one's trust in this divine promise, to rely for salvation solely on Jesus Christ, that, and that alone, is saving faith. Yet that is not the whole of Christian faith. The faith of a Christian in its totality comprises trust not only in the saving Gospel truths. Christian faith makes God's Word the only rule and norm of its entire life and conduct. Whatever God's Word forbids, the Christian will shun; whatever God's Word demands, the Christian will do. To God's prohibition as well

as to His command the Christian's faith says, "Yea and Amen," whether his reason understands or not, though his flesh raises a thousand objections. A word of Scripture like "Flee youthful lusts" will bind the Christian's conscience to refrain from such amusements, such literature, such conversation, as would tend to arouse in him "lusts," such desires as God and Christ want him to flee. In such matters Christian faith exercises its divine power by keeping under his body and bringing it unto subjection of God's word and will, 1 Cor. 9:27. In our passage, however, the Apostle does not speak of questions of conduct decided in God's Word, either by commandment or by prohibition. He has in mind questions pertaining to the large field of adiaphora, matters of indifference, things wherein the Christian's faith has the liberty to choose for himself.

The weak in faith is not to be cast out of the Christian Church; on the contrary, he is to be "received." The term προσλαμβάνω is used in the New Testament in a good and in an evil sense, in the latter, e. g., Acts 17:5. In the present discussion Paul uses the term to denote the reception into Christian fellowship. This fellowship was established when they became members of the Christian Church through faith. Into this fellowship the congregation members are to receive the weak continually, as the present imperative indicates. The weakness, therefore, which the Apostle has in mind, is not of such a nature as to sever the unity of faith and Christian fellowship, even though it is a long continued weakness, lasting perhaps throughout the lifetime of the weak Christian. As long as the weakness continues, so long is the congregation to keep on receiving him. In this sense, of lovingly receiving into fellowship, the word is used, e. g., Philem. 12:17; Acts 18:26. In Rom. 13:2; 15:7, the word describes God's and Christ's reception of believing Christians irrespective of their weakness. Particularly from 15:7 an illuminating light falls on the spirit in which Christians are to receive their weak brethren. It is the spirit of God and Christ, that spirit of grace and loving-kindness to which they owe their own reception into fellowship with the saints and into the household of God. It is a spirit of unfeigned love, brotherly affection, considerate kindness, never-ending tolerance of the weakness of the brethren.

The Apostle regards this spirit of such importance in the proper reception of the weak brother that he adds, "Not to doubtful disputations." This is a gentle reminder addressed to those who have just been directed to receive the weak in faith, calling their attention to a danger against which they must be on their guard. "To," εἰς, denotes here the result which follows an action. The reception of the weak on the part of the congregation members

was to be of a nature and to be conducted in a spirit that would render impossible "doubtful disputations." This phrase has been variously interpreted. According to Zahn the Apostle warns here against a discussion of the contrasting views. Then the Apostle would be committing the same fault against which he warns his readers, for he certainly enters upon a lengthy discussion of this whole matter. Philippi sees here a warning against calling forth doubting thoughts in the mind of the weak person. Yet, διάκρισις in the sense of doubt is not found in Biblical Greek and is exceedingly rare in classical Greek. In the two other passages in which the word occurs in the New Testament it designates a discriminating, discerning judgment; concerning spirits, 1 Cor. 12:10; concerning good and evil, Heb. 5:14. Διαλογισμός designates "the thinking of a man deliberating with himself" (Thayer); reasoning, thought, opinion, view. In the New Testament the term usually has a derogatory connotation, a sinful, at least a faulty, erroneous reasoning or line of thought. This seems to fit best into the present connection. Receive not the weak brother in a manner which will result in passing judgment on his views or on his line of reasoning which induced him to adopt his course of action. That would not be receiving the brother into Christian fellowship, that would not strengthen him nor remove his scruples. That would rather have the opposite result. It would only serve to place a stumbling block or an occasion to fall into the brother's way, against which possibility the Apostle warns so earnestly, v. 13. And there is danger of that in a twofold direction, one described vv. 14-19, the other vv. 20-23.

Even though nothing is unclean of itself and of itself cannot harm the weak brother, yet because of his weakness, because he regards it as unclean for himself, it becomes unclean for him. This fact should never be overlooked by the confident Christian, should put him on his guard against grieving the weak brother because of meat. Note that Paul does not write "through food," διὰ βρώματος, denoting the cause, but διὰ βρώμα, because of, by reason, on account of, denoting the reason for which something is done. Nor does he add the pronoun, thy food, nor the article. He simply says "on account of food," food as food, an adiaphorous matter, in which one may do as he pleases, no special kind of food being prescribed or forbidden. In this matter of food the weak brother is not to be grieved, the present indicative denoting the constant or repeated grieving. And again Paul does not define more closely the manner in which he is grieved. While he may be thinking particularly of grieving him by despising him, vv. 3, 10b, yet the expression includes any manner of causing grief or sorrow to him. Grieving the brother is not walking charitably, v. 15. Charity rather

seeks peace and edification, v. 19. Grieving the neighbor in any manner may close his heart against instruction and finally destroy him for whom Christ died and destroy him through your food, your food being the cause of his destruction!

That is the one way of placing a stumbling block in his way. The other is outlined in vv. 20-23. In order to escape the contempt or ridicule of his fellow Christians, the weak brother may be induced to eat what he still regards as unclean to himself. That would indeed be evil, wrong, baneful for himself, v. 20. For one who is still in a state of deliberating with himself (that is the meaning of the present participle διακρινόμενος) has been condemned because he ate before being sure that he might eat. Hence, while v. 22 is true, yet v. 21 must never be lost sight of. Rather refrain from meat than cause your brother to lose his salvation.

The prohibition of sitting in judgment upon the weak brother does not prohibit brotherly instruction and admonition. On the contrary, the Apostle himself instructs in a tactful, loving manner the weak, and he admonishes his readers to pursue a course which would make for mutual edification, 14:19. Talking the matter over on the basis of Scripture in brotherly love may be helpful to both parties. The weak Christian may thereby be emboldened to cast off his scruples and to enjoy the full liberty of a believing child of God. The other may learn to recognize some weakness of his own, some failure properly to understand the reasons, the doubts, the scruples of him whom he regarded as a weak brother. Even if after prolonged discussion each one still retains his own opinion, both will have gained a better understanding of, a higher regard for, a more affectionate love toward each other, and may have learned to avoid the dangers against which the Apostle warns both.

"For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs," v. 2. While v. 1 had stated the general principle governing the attitude of a Christian toward the brother weak in faith, the particular weakness had not been named. This information is given in v. 2. The one has confidence to eat all things. On ποτεῖν with the infinitive in the sense of "to have confidence" compare Acts 15:11 (we have confidence to be saved), and the similar expression πίστω ἔχω Acts 14:9. Over against those who confidently ate whatever food was served them there were others who were weak, ἀσθενῶν, in a state of weakness. These were "the weak in faith" whom the Apostle had in mind particularly when he laid down the general rule, v. 1. Being weak in their conviction, they did not eat meat, but adopted a strictly vegetarian diet; they ate herbs, vegetables. The fact that the distinction between meat and vegetable diet was never made in the Jewish law, as little as wine was forbidden to the Jews (v. 21),

rules out the interpretation that the congregation at Rome was perturbed by Judaizing errorists such as had broken into the congregation of Galatia. If that had been the case, the Apostle would have warned the Christians against the peril of being led astray by false doctrine and would have condemned the false teachers in such scathing terms as he employed against the Judaizers in Galatia, Gal. 1:6-9; 5:7-12; 6:12, 13; the errorists in Colossae, Col. 2:8-23; in Corinth, 2 Cor. 10:1 to 11:15; cp. also 1 Tim. 4:1-9. Neither does it seem that the weak brethren in Rome demanded that all Christians refrain from eating meat and adopt a purely vegetarian diet. In that case Paul would have given them an extensive instruction on the doctrine of Christian liberty and on adiaphora, as he instructed the Christians at Colossae and in Galatia on these doctrinal questions and the Christians at Corinth on the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which some among them were denying. In the case of the weak brethren at Rome, Paul quite evidently takes for granted that the doctrine of Christian liberty is well known. The trouble there was that this doctrine was not properly applied, neither by the weak in their own conduct and in their attitude toward others, nor by the other members in their treatment of the weak. The Apostle pleads with the weak not to commit the fatal mistake of making a doctrinal issue out of matters which God has left free, on which each one may be ruled by his own mind, v. 5, since there is no doctrine, no word of God demanding a certain diet. He warns the weak against improper sinful judging, v. 3, and the other members against sinful pride and self-exaltation, v. 3a, and against offending the weak, vv. 14-23.

The Apostle definitely attributes the refusal to eat meat to the weakness of the Christian, a continuing weakness characterizing these members of the Christian congregation. They could not gain the confidence to eat all things, although their brethren in the faith continually exercised their Christian liberty in this matter. Just what reasons caused the weak to hesitate to adopt a more varied diet we are not told. The individual Christians may have been moved by different reasons. Perhaps they were timid, over-anxious Christians, who dared not to make use of their liberty, because they feared that eating meat and drinking wine, indulging in these kinds of food, might lead them to excess, to surfeiting and drunkenness, or at least distract their thoughts and minds from that close devotion to the Lord which they felt they owed Him. But irrespective of the exact nature of their misgivings, three facts are clear. The first: their misgivings induced them not to eat meat but to restrict themselves to a vegetable diet; the second: the Apostle attributes their choice, their asceticism, to a weakness in their faith; the third: while calling their attention to their weak-

ness which ought not continue and while warning them against certain dangers to which they were exposed, perhaps inclined, the Apostle does not demand that they cease their asceticism, that they eat all things, but regards them as his brethren, exhorts the other members of the congregation to receive them in a spirit of brotherly affection and solicitude, which should prompt them to respect the conviction of these weak brethren and for their sake even refrain from eating meat if thereby the weak brother be grieved or offended, vv. 13-24. This mutual forbearance and tolerance, refraining from judging and from despising the brother, is the great lesson of our text.

In fact, before warning the weak against the dangers besetting them, the Apostle first voices a note of warning to the strong. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not." V.3a. Before considering this warning, let us take note that while the Apostle calls the vegetarians weak brethren, he does not call the others strong. Only after his extended discussion of this particular weakness has been concluded and only after he proceeds to the application of the truths outlined in chapter 14 of weaknesses in general, does the Apostle make a distinction between weak and strong, 15: 1, and then only for the purpose of reminding the strong of their duty to exercise their strength in the proper manner by bearing the infirmities of the weak. We have here a splendid example of apostolic wisdom and pastoral tact. Paul does not want to create a division, does not want to split the congregation into two opposite factions, that of the strong and that of the weak. He wants to avoid a twofold danger: that of needlessly humiliating the weak, and that of stirring up thoughts of pride and self-exaltation in those who would classify themselves as the strong. Moreover, a Christian who had full confidence in the matter of food and drink might have been weak in another respect. Paul does not mean to create the impression as though the mere confidence to eat all kinds of food constituted the Christian a strong Christian. The very fact that he looked down upon the weak would prove his own weakness, his own lack of love, of brotherly consideration and Christian knowledge.

In warning the confident Christian not to despise the weak, Paul uses a very strong expression, ἐξουθενέω, as a comparison of passages in which it occurs will show, Luke 18:9; 23:11; 1 Cor. 1:28; 6:4; 16:11; Gal. 4:14. To regard a fellow Christian as a man utterly of no account is certainly doing despite against Christ Himself, who acknowledges every Christian, weak or strong, as a member of His body. Yet, that is the very sin against which Paul warns. He sees the danger threatening one who disregards his plea to receive the weak in faith, or who receives him only

in a spirit which will lead him on to judging the thoughts of his fellow Christian. Instead of charitably, affectionately seeking to help the brother to overcome his weakness and attain to the same degree of assured confidence in the use of Christian liberty that he himself enjoys, he will ridicule the scruples of the weak, regard the brother as narrow-minded and superstitious, "will sneer at the scruples of the weak as mere prejudice or obscurantism." *Exp. Gr. Test.* This is the danger to which the Christian confiding in his liberty is exposed and against which he must be on his guard.

Having warned the one class against spiritual pride and self-exaltation, Paul immediately turns to the other class with a warning just as outspoken because just as necessary. "Let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth." If the weak brother begins to judge his fellow Christian who in full confidence of faith eats all things, if he regards and treats him on this account as a lax and unprincipled person, as less faithful than himself to his Lord and Savior, he unduly exalts himself over his fellow Christian and passes adverse judgment on the brother in matters on which no such judgment should be passed. Eating meat or eating vegetables does not in the least affect one's standing before God. Eating only vegetables does not make you the better Christian, and eating meat does not make your fellow Christian less acceptable to God, less beloved by Him, "for God hath received him," accepted him into His companionship, adopted him as a member of His family. Note the consummate skill of the Apostle in choosing the words of his admonition. While exhorting the weak, he at the same time reminds the strong that after all, Christianity is not a matter of one's own choice, but of God's gracious reception, and therefore the confident Christian should never exalt himself above his weak brother, lest he fall from grace.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand." V. 4.

Paul adds another reason why the weak Christian should not judge his brother making full use of his liberty to eat meat. Such judging would be usurping a right belonging to Christ alone. The term οἰκέτης for servant occurs only here and in Luke 16:13; Acts 10:7; 1 Pet. 2:18. While δοῦλος emphasizes the bondage, οἰκέτης stresses the connection with the house, hence translated "house servant" Acts 10:17. As long as the master is satisfied with him whom he has received as his house servant and regards him as a member of his household, no one has the right to doubt or dispute or deny the right of the servant to membership in the household of that master. The master alone decides whom he shall retain in his service or dismiss from his household. The Church is Christ's

household, not the Christian's. The right of passing judgment upon the members of Christ's house belongs exclusively to the Head of the House, Christ, not to its individual members. The judgment of one member regarding the right to membership of another in the household of Christ does not affect the standing of the one being judged, moreover is sinful and displeasing to the Master of the House. Each individual servant of Christ has his own Master, the same that is the Master of the entire household. And this Master has told each Christian, "Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ," Matt. 23:10. This implies that no one may usurp mastery over the members of that household which is a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. 2:9, and that no Christian need fear the derogatory opinion and judgment of any other as to his status within the Church so long as his Master is satisfied with him; cp. 1 Cor. 4:3-5.

A servant of Christ "standeth or falleth to his own Master," τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ. The dative is that of relation. The Lord Jesus is the one and only Master to whom the Christian as a Christian stands in the relation of a house servant, and in relation to whom he stands as long as he stands as a Christian and falls if and when he falls, apostatizes from Christ. His relation to his friends, to his family, his country, etc., may change without in the least interfering with his relation to Christ. He may be disowned, ostracized, denounced as a pestilent fellow; cp. Acts 24:5. That will not affect his relation to Christ so long as Christ owns him as one of His servants. On the other hand, a member of the congregation may be honored and respected by his fellow members, he may hold a responsible position, and still Christ's judgment may be: I never knew you, Matt. 7:23. Where this Lord of the Church has not given the right to pass judgment on a member of the Church, as He has, e. g., Matt. 18:15 ff.; 1 Cor. 5:1-13, it is stark presumption to usurp that right over one's fellow servant which belongs exclusively to his own Master. Not Christ's servant, but Christ, the Lord and Master, has the right to decide whether a man may eat meat, any kind of food, and remain a good Christian.

"Yea, he shall be holden up." The meat eater shall be holden up, shall be made to stand, in spite of the doubts and misgivings of the weak brother, even though the weak brother cannot see how it is possible that one permits himself such liberties and still can remain a servant of Christ. Still he remains just that. Still he stands, because he is made to stand. There is one who is able to uphold the meat eater as well as the vegetarian. "For God is able to make him stand." That God whom the weak brother trusts to keep him in faith while eating vegetables is not shorn of His power to save by the fact that one eats meat. That is a lesson

which the weak Christian must never forget. Do not make your own opinion, your own weakness, the divining rod in endeavoring to locate the wellspring of saving faith. It is not the opinion and judgment of man, least of all the weakness in faith of a fellow Christian, that establishes the Christianity of the meat eater, but God and His grace, the same God and the same grace which makes the vegetarian to stand.

Note again how tactfully the Apostle chooses his words in order really to edify (v. 19) both classes. While he addresses his admonition primarily to the weak, he teaches at the same time a very necessary lesson to the others in order to guard them against sinful pride: cp. 3a. They must constantly be aware that while they confidently make full use of the liberty Christ has procured for them, it is not their own valor and strength that keeps them standing. It is the power of God alone. Hence, they should beware of abusing their liberty. Cp. Rom. 11:20b; 14:14-23; 1 Cor. 10:12.

"One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." Vv. 5, 6a. Just what do the terms *esteem*, *κρίνω*, and *regard*, *φρονέω*, mean? *Κρίνω* originally means to separate, put aside; then, to choose, select; and because one selects that which one approves, the word obtains the meaning to esteem, approve. In this latter sense it is used in v. 5, as is proved by the term *φρονέω*, which the writer chooses in v. 6 in lieu of *κρίνω*. *Φρονέω* means to have understanding, to direct one's mind to something, to seek the interest of some person or object, to be zealous in one's service, to serve, or observe, or look out for his glory, interest, etc. So one separates, selects, esteems a day above a day, is zealous in the observance of a day in preference to another. Now, what day has the author in mind? Interpreters thinking of Judaizing errorists, or of Jewish Christians, regard the Sabbath as the day chosen. This interpretation restricting the day to the Sabbath exclusively is ruled out by the omission of the article. Paul's words are too comprehensive to permit a restriction to the Sabbath. The "day" is left as vague and indefinite as language can make it. The term includes any one day, or several days of the week, or month, or year, in regular or irregular intervals.

What was the motive prompting the selection of a day before another, or of esteeming every day alike? The Apostle states that very clearly. Both the observer and the non-observer of days is motivated by his sincere desire to serve the Lord. The dative *κατά* is again the dative of relation. The action flows in both cases from a relation of love and esteem of the Lord, the Lord

Jesus, to whom this term is applied throughout the context. Their one and all-important question was, How can I keep my relation to Jesus, my Lord, unclouded, close, intimate, so that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death? Phil. 1:20. The clause "He that eateth not," etc., is omitted in most texts and is not necessary, though it does not introduce a thought foreign to the context as Zahn states. It may, however, have been caused by Homoeoteleuton, as the *Exp. Gr. Test.* suggests, following Philippi, Tischendorf, and other noted critics. In the sermon, of course, the pastor will explain this clause also, particularly, as Stoeckhardt observes, since it is a matter of course that the one who regards all days alike and sanctifies every day by the word of God and prayer does so with the intention of serving the Lord in this manner.

Just in what manner did the Christians want to serve the Lord on the day chosen? That again is not stated. Certainly public worship cannot be considered. In the first place, the duty of congregational service is not a matter left to the individual nor even to the congregation to decide. That is a duty imposed on them by the Lord, and neglect of public worship is contrary to God's will, Heb. 10:25; Luke 10:16. In the second place, the decision as to the day on which the congregation gathers for public worship is a matter for the congregation to decide. It is not left to the choice of the individual, who according to 1 Cor. 14:33, 40 is required to submit to the order established by the congregation. The Christian may have chosen a day on which he concentrated in a special manner on the study of the Word of God, on works of charity, on visiting the sick, on admonishing the erring brother, refraining perhaps from his daily work, or restricting that to the most necessary matters, or rising earlier. And all this not in a self-righteous, vaunting spirit, but for the sole purpose of serving the Savior. Another Christian did not choose a special day but made it a point to serve the Lord and do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith, as he had opportunity. The Apostle gives his approval to whatever the individual has decided on and adds only the exhortation, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his mind"; be carried to fullness of assurance and conviction that what he does and how he does it is pleasing to the Lord and serviceable to his own and his neighbor's welfare.

But why does the Apostle enter into this matter at all? Was there a clash of views also with regard to the question of observing days? We believe that this question did not disturb the congregation at Rome. At least it did not perturb the Christians there to such an extent, nor was it fraught with such dangers for the individual, as did the question of meat or vegetable diet. We

believe that is proved by the manner in which the Apostle introduces and treats this question. In speaking of observing days, Paul does not distinguish between weak and strong Christians. He simply states what one does and what another does. Moreover, he does not devote much time to this matter, nor does he refer to it after v. 6a, but immediately returns to the question of eating and drinking. It seems quite plausible that there was no dispute on the question of days in the church at Rome. Each one did as he pleased without judging or despising the other. We hold, therefore, that the Apostle introduces this matter only in order to show the folly of making the difference in diet a controversial matter. Why do you not pursue the same course with regard to food that you are taking with regard to days? In the latter question you fully recognize the right of every individual Christian to decide this matter for himself and make full use of his liberty to choose or not to choose a day. Those of you observing days do not judge those that regard all days alike, while the latter do not despise the former. Now, the question of meat and drink lies on the same plane with the question of days. In neither case does God prescribe a particular course of action. In both he has left it to the "mind," the opinion, the consideration of the individual. And this heart and mind is imbued with a desire to choose only what is pleasing to the Lord. That is proved by the fact that "he that eateth," "giveth God thanks," sanctifies his eating by the Word of God and prayer and hence "eateth to the Lord," serves the Lord by eating to His glory. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:31. In like manner, "he that eateth not," who has chosen rather to eat herbs, also "giveth God thanks," sanctifies also his vegetable diet by God's Word and prayer. Hence, "to the Lord he eateth not," serves the Lord by eating not meat, but vegetables to the glory of the Lord. If then one of the fellow Christians has after prayerful and careful deliberation made up his mind just which of the two possible courses is the best for him to follow, considering his individual character, his personal inclinations, his environment and associations, and the peculiar temptations to which he may be exposed and be particularly vulnerable, then concede to him the liberty to adopt and follow this course and receive and treat him as a brother in faith. If he has decided on a vegetable diet, do not despise and ridicule him, even though this choice may be due to his weakness, and irrespective of whether the recognition of this weakness has led him to adopt his course or whether he is not even aware of his weakness in doing so. If another brother feels free to eat all things, then let not the vegetarian judge and condemn him, but in mutual love and consideration let them continue to preserve the unity of faith through the bond of peace.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." Vv. 7, 8. Marvelous words! Words that are spirit and are life indeed! Words that ought to dispel all desire to sit in judgment upon or to despise one who like himself has been the recipient of so high an honor and privilege! The Apostle assures his readers that the spirit of self-effacing loyalty to the Lord manifested by the Christians at Rome in their manner of dealing with the question of observance of days and which he pictures as the ideal one in dealing with the question of eating and drinking, is not something unusual, something out of the ordinary, and that the admonition to exercise this spirit is not uncalled for or asking the impossible. On the contrary, he asserts that this is the spirit actually governing and permeating the entire Christian life, the spirit underlying and determining every action of the Christian. No Christian lives to himself, no Christian dies to himself; a Christian lives and dies unto the Lord. The datives *ἐαυτῷ* and *κυρίῳ* again are datives of relation. The relation of a Christian to his life and to his death is not one centered in himself, his own interest, his own strength, his own glory. Both living and dying is for the Christian inseparably related to Christ, indissolubly connected with his Lord Jesus. What is implied in living and dying unto the Lord is best learned from Scripture itself. Read Paul's confession Phil. 3:4-11. That is living to Christ. Read Col. 3:1 to 4:6. That is living unto the Lord! Read 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 18. That is dying unto Jesus! Read Phil. 1:20-26. That is living and dying unto the Lord Jesus Christ! And now, note! What Paul declares to be his earnest expectation and hope, Phil. 1:20; what is the subject of his constant prayer for his readers, 1 Thess. 1:11, 12; what Peter urges upon all Christians as the goal of their Christian service, a goal never to be lost sight of, 1 Pet. 4:11, that Paul pronounces here as his firm conviction, declares it by infallible inspiration of God as an unqualified, indisputable fact of all Christians. Including himself with his readers and excluding not one of them, whether weak or strong, he tells them, tells us, None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; whether we live, we live unto the Lord, whether we die, we die unto the Lord. The two *τε* left untranslated in the Authorized Version connect the latter two statements intimately, the latter being the natural result and outflow of the former.

The fact that the Old Adam, our old sinful flesh and blood, still clings to the Christian is left out of consideration. The Apostle does not exhort his readers to strive for this spirit; he does not merely hold living and dying unto Christ before their eyes as a

wonderful ideal, never to be attained, but well worth battling for. No, he states it as a simple fact: None of us liveth unto himself. We all live and die unto the Lord. The Apostle describes the Christians as God and Christ see them, washed, purified, justified, sanctified, by the name of the Lord Jesus. All their sins (and they sin daily) are forgiven, their iniquities were subdued, their sins cast forever into the depths of the sea, Micah 7:19, when He to whom they now live died for them on the cross, 2 Cor. 5:19 f., and thus blotted their sins forever from the memory of God, Jer. 31:34. For Christ's sake God views the life the Christian now lives in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God as the life that Christ lives in them, as the life according to the new man. That is a living unto Christ and Christ alone: "For me to live is Christ"; Christ the beginning and the end, the center and the circumference of a Christian's life; to Him he lives, to Him, committing body and soul into His loving and almighty hands, the Christian dies. What a glorious, blessed life, what a blessed, glorious death!

From this marvelous fact the Apostle draws a conclusion equally marvelous. "For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." V. 9. Öv draws the conclusion from the statement just made. The very fact that we live and die unto the Lord proves without the shadow of a doubt that we are the Lord's own. For only then can one live and die unto the Lord, after he who cannot by his own reason or strength come to Jesus, has been brought by the Holy Spirit to the Lord and through faith has been made the Lord's own. And what a blessed privilege and comfort it is to know that in life and death we are the Lord's, His own sheep, John 10:27-30, His servants, His friends, John 15:15, whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, Heb. 2:11; members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, whom He nourishes and cherishes, Eph. 5:29, 30. No matter what happens to us, we know Rom. 8: 35-40. Neither death nor life can separate us from Christ. Even in death we are the Lord's. As He governs and rules the life and development of His Christians from infancy to old age, so He is with them always, ruling and governing their death and decay. It is He that has said, Gen. 3:19b. He it is that at His appointed time permits death to take us out of the land of the living and corruption to seize upon our inanimate body. Yet though we die, though our body changes, His loving power does not change. His we are in life and death. As our soul, washed by His blood, is carried by His angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:22, to be with Him in Paradise, Luke 23:43; Rev. 14:13, so he does not forget our body, redeemed by that selfsame blood. He whose wisdom is past finding out, whose power knows no limits, watches over our

body as it slowly dissolves into its elements; He preserves these elements in loving care, and on the Last Day He will again breathe into that dust the breath of life, will restore to us our soul, and in eternal life we shall be the Lord's.

Is that true? Is that possible? Paul silences all doubts and answers all misgivings. "For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord of the dead and living." V. 9. The reading best attested omits "and revived." It is included in "rose," for His resurrection was unto life, and life eternal. Two incontestable facts, Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, constitute the incontrovertible proof for the statement of v. 8, that we are the Lord's. For no other purpose did Christ die and rise from the dead than to establish and prove His Lordship over dead and living. Already in the word of prophecy this was foretold for the comfort of the believing children of God, Is. 53:12. This lordship Christ proved before His resurrection by not only healing physically, mentally, and spiritually those that lived, but by raising the dead, quickening whosoever He would, John 5:21; Luke 7:14; 8:54; John 11:43. That was proved at the time of His death and resurrection, Matt. 27:51-53; that is the universal testimony of the New Testament, Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:20-27, 55-57; Heb. 2:14, 15, etc. Christ has established it beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt that He is indeed the Lord of the dead and the living, of all that believe on Him and in His power live unto Him and die unto Him.

This statement of the great basic facts of Christianity is the most powerful motive to receive one another considerately and lovingly and not to judge or despise any brother because in matters left to the decision of the Christians his view may differ from one's own. Therefore the Apostle repeats his admonition of v. 3 in the form of a double question and reversing the order of v. 3. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" V. 10. "If even death cannot destroy the life communion of the Christian with Christ, why should eating or not eating be permitted to do this? And if the rule of Christ over His redeemed is not affected essentially either by the life or the death of His own, why should the distinction between vegetarians and meat eaters destroy that unity and communion so essential to the welfare of the congregation? Let above all the ascetic but also the liberal-minded Christian keep this ever in mind." Zahn, *Roemerbrief*, p. 575 f.

In preaching on this text the pastor, after having explained the term adiaphoron in the introduction, may speak on *The Apostle's Instruction on Adiaphora*. 1. As to their nature. They are matters which God has left free, in which the Christian's mind has liberty to choose, never, however, abusing this liberty. Warn

against sins as being matters of indifference because so regarded by men. God's Word alone decides what is sin and what an adiaphoron. 2. As to their implications. A. Negative: Do not judge or despise a Christian because he differs from you in his conduct in regard to adiaphora. B. Positive: Also in adiaphora we must live unto the Lord, in fulfilling His will, to the glory of His Name, in gratitude to His love, to the welfare of our brother.—*We Live Unto the Lord.* 1. What does this mean? Vv. 7, 8. 2. How is this manifested? Vv. 1-6. 3. Whence do we receive the power? V. 9.—*The Christian's Relation to Adiaphora.* He does not permit different opinions to disturb the peace of the congregation. Vv. 1-6. In these matters also he lives unto the Lord. Vv. 7-9.—*The Fruit of Christ's Lordship Over Dead and Over Living.* 1. We live and die unto the Lord. 2. We live in peace and harmony with our fellow Christians.—On vv. 7-9: *Jesus Is Our Lord!* To Him we live; to Him we die; His own we are in time and eternity. Or, *Jesus Is Our Lord!* Therefore we are His own in life and death; therefore let us live and die unto Him.

TH. LAETSCH

Outlines on the Wuerttemberg Epistle Selections

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

1 John 4:7-12

If anybody thinks the Bible is an old book with no message for our times he ought to study this text. How practical! how timely! how intimately related to everyday life and present problems! The Scriptures, of course, contain revelations about supernatural, heavenly things. Let us be supremely thankful for that feature! But they likewise bring us instruction pertaining to our conduct, our contact with our fellow Christians and people in general. Cf. the letters to the Romans, the Ephesians, and Colossians, which have in definite divisions a doctrinal and a practical part. The text treats a practical topic by speaking of the love we owe each other. The question is answered

Why Must Christians Have and Manifest Love?

1

God their heavenly Father is love. He does not merely manifest love; He is love. To paint Him, as Luther says, a person would have to paint love. He is eager to be closely united with us, to help and to bless us. Cf. our creation and preservation. That there is so much suffering in the world does not disprove the reality of God's love; it merely testifies to the power of sin.

We Christians are God's children in a special sense. We are "born of God." V. 7. He has regenerated us through His Holy Spirit. As His children we must follow His example. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We must love each other and our fellow men in general.

The world is filled with hatred. Hatred is applauded. Our aim as Christians must be to love, to love even our enemies.

2

God manifested His love in a most vital way by sending His Son for our redemption. John points to the heart of the Christian religion by speaking of the highest manifestation of the love of God. He sent His Son to die that we might live, to pay for our sins that we might be cleansed of all guilt. V. 9. That was done in spite of our unworthiness. God's love existed before we ever loved Him. V. 10. We can never adequately extol this proof of God's love. It certainly demonstrates that His love is real, genuine, not mere words.

Our reaction must be that we gratefully base our hope on this manifestation of divine love, accepting Jesus as our Redeemer, and that we, furthermore, likewise show genuine, true love toward our fellow men. If sacrifices are required, let them be cheerfully rendered.

3

Whoever is a Christian cannot but love because he has been born of God and God lives in him. Having been born of God (v. 7), the Christian possesses new life. God lives in Him. V. 12. The divine image is beginning to be renewed; since God is love, the Christian loves. That cannot be different. Fire is warm; it must be warm, that is its nature. As long as a person is a regenerate being He loves; that is his nature. If love is gone, the new spiritual life is gone, too. V. 8.

Do we see how essential love is in the life of the Christian? A present-day application: Let us not think that love for our enemies makes a person weak and feeble in his loyalty toward his country and his government! But neither let us think that the present war dispenses us from the obligation to love the enemies fighting us!

W. ARNDT

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

James 3:13-18

As a rule God does not take us to heaven as soon as we have become Christians. He leaves us here that we may let our light shine, etc., Matt. 5:16. By *word* and *life* we are to testify of all

that Jesus has done for us. Luke 8:39; 1 Pet. 3:1b. What we are to tell others about Jesus is written in many places in Holy Writ. Here in our text we are told *how we are to live* so that our life may be a testimony of the Savior's love and power.

The Life which Testifies of Jesus' Love and Power

1

Our text describes the *nature* of this life.

a) First of all our text tells us what must be avoided.

1. "Bitter envying." V. 14. Even unbelievers know that envy and jealousy are both shameful and foolish. Whoever is guilty of them shows that his heart is bare of true love for his neighbor. If he loves his neighbor as himself, he would rejoice just as much at another's success as at his own. How shameful the jealousy of Cain against Abel! Saul against David! and the Pharisees against Jesus!

But besides being shameful, envy is also foolish, because it keeps us from enjoying the gifts of God which He wishes us to enjoy. 1 Tim. 6:17. Instead of counting his own blessings, enjoying them and being thankful for them, the jealous person embitters his own mind and heart by dwelling upon his own disadvantages and the good fortune of others, e. g., Joseph's brothers, Gen. 37:4; Haman. Esther 5:13.

Sad to say, we notice this sin also among Christians. Matt. 20:20-28.—

2. Our text warns us to avoid also carnal glorying, v. 14, *bragging*. This sin even the heathen have condemned. Plautus ridiculed the bragging soldier, who spoke much of what he would do, but ran away as soon as he saw the foe. When Benhadad bragged of his power and of his great army, etc., the king of Israel told him: 1 Kings 20:11.

Followers of the lowly Jesus, who washed His disciples' feet, should avoid such pride. Rom. 12:3. When Peter, tempted by pride, asked the Lord Jesus, "What shall we have therefore?" Jesus warned him by a parable which ended: "Many that are first shall be last." Matt. 19:30. Cp. Prov. 27:1.

b) Instead of these vices the Christian should practice the virtues mentioned here in our text.

1. He should desire to be pure in heart, v. 17, that is, he ought to learn better and better his own sinfulness and pray: Ps. 51:1, 2.

2. Instead of insisting on his rights in every case, he should be "peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated," that is to say, if at all possible, the faithful Christian should live peaceably with other men, Rom. 12:18, e. g., Abraham toward Lot; David toward Saul; Stephen praying for his persecutors; Jesus on the cross.

If we rightly consider our own heart, we shall find much cause for repentance. We have reason to pray: Hymn 349, vv. 6, 7 (old Hymnal); 399, vv. 4, 5 (new Hymnal).

2

Our text speaks also of the *fruits* of this conduct.

a) It points to the shameful results produced by envy, selfish bragging, and contempt for others by telling us that

1. These sins come from the devil, v. 15, and out of a corrupt, wicked heart.

2. The text points out also that such sins will produce confusion and every evil work. V. 16.

By walking in the ways of God we avoid all this. 1 Pet. 3:10-13; Ps. 1.

b) The *merciful, gentle conduct* of a true Christian wins many friends. V. 18; Prov. 16:7. Among the first Christians there was such a love of one Christian for the other as to cause the heathen to say: "Look how those Christians love each other! They are ready to die for each other, whereas we heathen kill each other." Such godly, peaceful conduct produces happy homes, happy congregations, true joy in the Lord. Again and again we will notice the truth of the Lord's saying: "Godliness is profitable," etc. 1 Tim. 4:8.

c) The faithful Christian should ever remember that his Lord will not forget any good work, but that even a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name will be rewarded. He should humble himself under the mighty hand of God that God may exalt him in due time, 1 Pet. 5:6. He should take to heart 1 Pet. 4:15; Matt. 5:11, 12. He follows the example of the Good Samaritan, of the Lord Jesus Himself.

d) At times we may be troubled by the thought that a gentle, forgiving spirit is not appreciated; that the meek and mild are treated with injustice, without consideration, neglected and despised as weaklings; but who fared better: bragging Goliath or humble David, envious Saul or merciful David, the envious Pharisees or the Lord Jesus, who now has a name that is above every name? And even though Abel was martyred and Jesus was crucified and many meek and gentle Christians suffered under the cruelty of the proud and haughty, remember that there is a God in heaven whose Word has never failed, who will see to it that His humble Christians will be exalted in due time. 1 Pet. 5:6; Rom. 8:18.

Let us therefore now crucify our flesh, in which also live these sins of envy and pride, and let us ask God to strengthen us in humility, purity, and gentleness, so that our light may shine before men. Heb. 13:20, 21.

M. SOMMER

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity**2 Tim 2:1-6.**

Man can be a good citizen by his own natural powers. He is capable of civil righteousness. Many unbelievers are law-abiding, loyal, patriotic citizens. They would, however, be still better citizens if they were Christians. Christianity strengthens civil righteousness and produces the highest type of citizenship. "The fellow citizens with the saints" are at the same time the best citizens of their country. One of the reasons for this is that they pray.

Praying Christians Are Their Country's Most Valuable Asset

1. *They pray for all men*
2. *They pray for their government*

1

Christians are deeply interested in all the people of the globe. They do not single out any nation as incurably evil and unworthy of further existence. They hold all nations, races, and tongues in high regard. Why? Vv. 3-6. God is the Savior of all men. The man Christ Jesus mediated between the one God and all of them by giving Himself a Ransom for them all. God for the Redeemer's sake is gracious to them all, forgives them all their sins, and earnestly desires that all come to this knowledge, this faith, and thus be saved. What Christ purchased at so great a cost, at the price of His holy precious blood, should according to the gracious will of God come into the actual possession of everyone. Hence the Gospel must be preached to all everywhere that sinners may believe, rejoice, and take comfort in the righteousness and salvation merited for them by Christ.

This, then, is what Christians desire, that the testimony of Christ may spread from pole to pole for the enlightenment and salvation of all. 2 Cor. 5:14 ff. This is the main burden of all their supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. Not as if they were perfect in this, but ever they repent of their selfishness and indolence and revert to fervent prayer for the salvation of mankind. And when they see how mission work progresses on earth, they rejoice and give thanks to God for hearing their prayers.

This attitude of prayerful concern for the salvation of all men makes them valuable citizens. It is very helpful in removing the causes of war and in maintaining, or attaining, a just and honorable peace for their country. It takes the strain out of international relations and makes for amity and friendship between nations. It opens the channels of intercourse and commerce. Devout citizens are the horsemen and chariots, the most effective arma-

ment and defense, the cause and source of the prosperity of their country. Though the world hate them, yet it owes everything to the Christians in its midst. Cf. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, III:99 f.

2

Christians pray also for the kings and all that are in authority. They pray for their government. They pay taxes, vote, abide by the laws, serve in various ways and capacities, but — best of all — they pray for the powers that be. The wisdom and efficiency of a government comes from above in answer to the prayers of Christians.

For what shall we Christians pray? V. 2. A government which makes such a life possible is a good government, regardless of its form. A good government allows the church to assemble, administer the means of grace, disseminate the Word, and protects the church in its rights. A good government discharges its own proper functions. Rom. 13:3, 4; 1 Pet. 2:14. It safeguards the rights of its subjects to life, property, and the pursuit of happiness.

Such a government we have; let our daily prayers be that we may retain it. It is no secret that our form of government is menaced by enemies from within and from without. What can we do to preserve it? We can bear witness against subversive forces, can cast our ballots against them, but without prayer this will be of little avail. Unless we intercede in behalf of our free institutions, we shall awake one of these fine days and see them all gone. But if we conscientiously pray for the welfare of our government, Jer. 29:7, we shall by the grace of God continue to lead a quiet, peaceable, godly, and free life.

The Apostle admonishes also to thanksgiving. Oh, how thankful the blessings of good government are! Especially we have every reason to give thanks to God for our government of, for, and by the people. We are still enjoying the priceless heritage of religious liberty. No church is preferred, none hindered. Church and State are separate.

May we continue steadfast in the true Christian faith as stated vv. 3-6. Among the very first and most precious fruits of this faith is the making of supplications, etc. Vv. 1, 2. Thus shall we be good, loyal, patriotic citizens, a real asset to our country.

PAUL G. BIRKMANN

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

1 Cor. 15:35-50

From time immemorial people have denied the resurrection of the dead — the heathen of ancient days, the Sadducees at the time of Christ. In our days whole denominations deny that

Christ will raise up the bodies of the dead on the Last Day. To forsake this fundamental teaching of the Christian religion leaves comfortless, helpless in the face of death and at the grave of their loved ones. This is particularly true in these days of war. Surely in times like this, when death strikes so quickly and suddenly, strikes perhaps when our loved ones are far away, it is wonderful to hear

The Glorious Doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection

It presents

1. *The fact of the resurrection*
2. *The form of the bodily resurrection*

1

(A) Within the congregation at Corinth there were some who denied a possibility of the bodily resurrection. For this reason Paul in 1 Cor. 15 speaks of the "glorious resurrection" of all believers. Vv. 12-34 Paul proves the possibility of the resurrection by the certain fact of the resurrection of Christ. He shows how futile our whole Christianity would be if Christ had not been raised from the dead. 1 Cor. 15:14, 18, 19. "But Christ was raised from the dead," as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 15:20, "and so we can also hope for our own resurrection."

(B) Apparently some among the Corinthians still were not satisfied, V. 35. A double question they raise: first, How are the dead raised up? and second, With what body do they come? St. Paul answers both questions, demonstrating from nature the fact of the resurrection. He indicates, v. 36, that people who doubt the fact of the resurrection are foolish, because they close their eyes to the miracle of nature. The seed that is placed into the ground must first corrupt, must waste away, must practically be consumed before it will quicken and spring up. Everyone that has planted a few beans in the back yard has had opportunity to observe the truth of Paul's argument. All nature proclaims the fact of the resurrection.

(C) Why should anyone be so foolish as to imagine that a man whose body has gone down into the grave, whose body has been consumed by the forces of destruction, that a man once dead cannot be made to live again? God, by the same almighty power that He used, and still uses every year, can take the dust of man's body and bring forth a body more wonderful, more glorious than the body that existed before. Why question the Divine Power to raise the dead, when we see it in every day quickening and reviving things that are dead? Job, Daniel, Jesus believed in the resurrection of the body. Cp. Job 19:25; Dan. 12:2;

John 5:25; 6:40; 11:25. All who wish to accept the Bible as the truth of God must also accept the fact of the resurrection.

But though many people believe in the resurrection of the body, they still have their scruples and doubts and wonder about the mode of the resurrection. They wonder just how Jesus can take a mortal body and make out of it an immortal body. It is this question that Paul takes up in the second section of our text.

2

A) In answer to the question v. 35b St. Paul again refers to nature. Vv. 37, 38. He shows that when the seed is sown into the ground, one does not use the plant itself, but merely the bare seed, and out of that seed God causes the plant to grow. V. 38. The plant that grows out of the seed of corn is different from the seed, yet it receives its body from the seed of corn that was sown. So the body that is sown in God's acre differs from the body that shall come forth out of the grave, yet it is the same body which died and was laid in the grave coming forth more glorious.

(B) Not all flesh is the same. V. 39. Human beings have bodies, have flesh similar to other creatures, and yet what a difference between the flesh of men and the flesh of beasts, of fish and of birds. Even a blind man can tell whether he is eating fish or fowl, beef or pork. So there will be a difference between the body, the flesh before the resurrection and after the resurrection.

(C) Vv. 40, 41. Paul also points to the celestial bodies differing from bodies terrestrial—both have glory, but the glory of each differs from the glory of the other bodies. V. 41. From these examples in nature St. Paul now points to the glorious resurrection of the dead and shows that though there is a tremendous difference in the glorious body of the resurrection from that body which was here in this world, yet it is the very same body which God hath given unto us here in this world.

(D) V. 42. In this life the body is in a process of decay—the doom of death is upon us, but it will be raised in incorruption, with nothing in it upon which disease and corruption will fasten, a body of undecayable parts and powers—it is mortality swallowed up by life. V. 43. Death makes spoil of the human body, deprives it of its beauty. But this human body, sown in dishonor, is to be raised in glory. V. 43. Cp. Phil. 3:21. The new and glorious body of the resurrection sown in weakness will be raised in power, 1 Cor. 15:43. Here in life the body tires of effort, needs frequent rest, at death it is utterly powerless, but when it will be raised, it will be free from the possibility of weakness and graced with the vigor of immortal youth. O death, where is thy sting? Vv. 45-49. He speaks of the first man, Adam, giving us a body of

the earth (earthly), while the second man, Christ Jesus the Lord of heaven, gives us a heavenly body, a body fit for the realms of bliss, a body that is to bear not the earthly image of Adam but a wonderful image of the heavenly King, into which our mortal body will be transformed, since in its present state it cannot inherit the spiritual and eternal kingdom of heaven, V. 50.

(E) In heaven we shall be associated with God, who is a Spirit, and with the holy angels, who are spirits, and so it is necessary that we have a spiritual body. Not a spirit body, but a body that is prepared for life in that spiritual realm of heaven, for life of immortality. On earth we are in need of food and drink to sustain our earthly body. In heaven these things shall no more be needed, and so the resurrection is necessary, giving us a spiritual body.

(F) Most assuredly the doctrine of the bodily resurrection is a blessed doctrine. It may have little meaning to us in days of health and strength, but it will mean much in days of sorrow and death. It may have little meaning to us while the family circle is complete, but when there are empty chairs at the table, when our loved ones die in distant lands, what a wonderful thing to turn to 1 Cor. 15 and to see Paul picture to us in inspired words the wonderful resurrection of the dead. May this story of the resurrection ever be a comfort to us in sorrow and sickness and especially in death.

E. L. ROSCHKE

Festival of the Reformation

Is. 40:6-8; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25

Christ's disciples were utterly hopeless when their Master had died on the cross. Luke 24:19, 20. Worst of all, v. 21; their greatest hopes lay buried with their Master in Joseph's grave. Then came Jesus and said to them, vv. 25:27. Had they only believed the Scriptures, they could have rejoiced on Good Friday because Jesus could end that day with the triumphant cry: "It is finished." Step over a period of 1500 years into the cell of an Augustinian monk in Erfurt; he has worried his way through school, university, into the monastery, trying to find the assurance that all is finished; but the result was despair: "My sin! My exceeding great sin!" Then the same Lord led him into the Scriptures; there he found the assurance he sought. Then he told others what he had found; and so he became the Reformer of the Church. And the keynote of his reformation was and remained: *Sola Scriptura*; or, as he put it in his great hymn:

The Word They Still Shall Let Remain!

1

Why was it necessary in the Christian Church to assert this principle so firmly? Christ's word was so plain, John 8:31. Was that forgotten? Yes. When Luther at the Diet of Worms asserted that pope and councils could err, only the Scriptures were infallible, Charles V in amazement forgot to close his mouth. In 1519, at the Leipzig Debate, Dr. Eck thought he had won the day when he had argued Luther into the assertion that "a layman who has the Scriptures is more to be trusted than pope and council without them"; Eck concluded, "If the Reverend Father believes that a council can err, he is to me as a heathen man and a publican."

That shows the condition in the Church at that time. Ever since the sixth century God's voice had become fainter; Rome, the pope's word, was supreme law in the Church, yea, in the world; no appeal from his decision; disobedience meant ban, interdict, death. That was the true root of all the trouble in the Church: God's Word had been supplanted.

That made the situation so serious. There had been great controversies before and great warriors for the truth: Athanasius, Augustine; but they fought for single doctrines, and they had the old trusty shield and weapon; and when they swung the sword of the Word, Christian men rallied round them. Now the authority of the Word of God was at stake. The foundation had been undermined.

2

For the Word of God Luther demanded right of way; in his First Thesis: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says"; before Cajetan and Miltitz; at the Diet of Worms: "Unless I be overcome and convinced by proofs of the Holy Scriptures." When Aleander, the papal legate, cried, "Burn the heretic!" Luther said, "Rather will I lose life and limb than surrender God's true and clear Word!" He translated the Bible for the people, while Rome prohibited the study of the Bible. True? No papal Bull to that effect; but Rome condemned all unauthorized translations; and Rome refused to authorize any translation. Sufficient?

Luther was banned by the pope, outlawed by the emperor. The world against Luther—and the Bible; and this proved a majority. At Worms, one confessor; at Augsburg, a goodly band; before Luther died, in every land those who feared God and gave Him glory. Luther said, "By the Word the world has been conquered; by the Word the world has been saved; by the Word the world will be restored. God's Word has been my sole study and concern, the sole subject of my preaching and writing. Other

than this I have done nothing in the matter. This same Word has, while I slept or made merry, accomplished this great thing." He refused to compromise with Rome, Zwingli, the Anabaptists, and other dreamers of dreams; he knew if it were not Scripture solely, it would not be Scripture at all.

3

What was truth in Luther's day is truth today. Men are still the same, Rom. 3:23, 24; God is still the same, Ex. 34:6, 7; Christ is still the same, Matt. 11:28. Despite all who attack it, "Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn."

Isn't it well that we have that assurance? Two words at the head of our discussion, one from the Old, one from the New Testament; not an old idea, now out of date; not a new fad that may soon change; but a truth warranted by Scripture from beginning to end and corroborated by experience of all times. What will you give for the crown of Charles V? And Leo X, who banned Luther, where is he? But men may come and men may go, and the world change with them; but the Word of the Lord abideth forever.

It is well that in this changing world we have one thing that is abiding. We speak of the "everlasting hills"; but the mountains are dying; rain and wind, sun and ice are leveling them. Today the world is topsy turvy; our whole social system is threatening to crash. Let it crash! Let the whole world crash! In the ruin is one rock immovable: the Word which in the Gospel is preached to you and which will save your souls.

The whole world is reaping the fruit of Luther's work; none more so than we who bear his name. Let us, with fervent thanks to God whose instrument he was, erect a monument to him, not of marble, not of brass, but of hearts inscribed:

God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure
Shall in eternity endure.

THEO. HOYER



Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

On Exemption of Church Property from Taxes.—No one can blame the Government if, in the present emergency, it seeks to tighten all tax screws that have become loose. Will the churches be affected? The following editorial of the *Christian Century* (Aug. 19, 1942) is apropos:

"As reported by a correspondent of the *Lutheran*, the tax authorities in Washington, D. C., have been revising the tax rolls and revising them upward so far as concerns certain properties owned by religious bodies which have hitherto been exempt. A Catholic institution, Immaculate Conception College, was found to own more land than its very small student body could reasonably occupy. The American University's acreage was declared to be more extensive than could be justified by its educational needs. Some acres of land belonging to Washington Cathedral were held to be too remotely connected with the religious use on which their exemption had been based. In all these cases the privilege of tax exemption was restricted to the land actually being used for religious or educational purposes. Granting that property really in use for such purposes should be exempt from taxation—and even that is an arguable question—it is a nice problem how much landscape can properly be included under this privilege. A few years ago New York went through the throes of a similar revision of its tax rolls. Out of many incidents in that connection, there lingers the memory of one tiny religious institution which was planted in the midst of a hundred-acre tract that was being held tax free against a rise in values which would ultimately provide an endowment. This abuse was corrected. The most dubious of the recent cases in Washington is that of the National Lutheran Home for the Aged, which was put back on the tax list on the ground that its services were rendered only to Lutherans. The ruling held that tax exemption can be rightfully granted only to institutions which serve 'the indefinite public' and not individuals 'because they are Methodists, members of the Eastern Star, Odd Fellows, or Knights of Columbus.' This is certainly not the criterion which has usually been applied. If it becomes general, the Lutherans will be hard hit, for they, perhaps more than any other denomination of Christians, have accepted the obligation of providing for the helpless members of their own group and have built institutions for that purpose."

A.

"Let It Be Confessional But Not Sectarian."—*The Lutheran* (July 22, 1942), under the given heading, prints a letter from one of its readers pleading for synthesis *vs.* analysis of Lutheranism. Among other things the writer says: "Lutheranism claims to be a timeless and comprehensive interpretation of that faith whose historical materials are the New Testament and the Church of Jesus Christ. The Word and the Church are both by inspiration. Our Lutheran faith does not desire to be judged by others on the ground of one or another article of its many confessions. It will not condemn any other Christian group on so narrow ground. We would both be judged and judge by the sum of all the articles of all our Confessions. [Italics our own.]

"Let us not bitterly consume our light and our testimony in analyzing this or that article and in the end only manage to unloose the cement which binds and holds together our Church's undivided confession. Let us rather nourish our light and our testimony in synthesizing all the Articles into one magnificent version of the Christian religion for contemporary generations who cry out desperately for 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' *In analysis lies disagreement, disunity, discord, and failure; in synthesis lies at-one-ness, unity, concord, and a winning witness of Jesus.*" [Italics our own.]

We have quoted from the letter only the salient points that bring out the writer's plea in clear light. It certainly does not require much intelligence to perceive how utterly impossible it is to do what he demands, namely, "to judge and be judged [merely] by the sum of all the articles of all our Confessions." Our very Confessions do what he deprecates: they carefully scrutinize and analyze their own confessional statements and those of opposing Confessions. The *Apology*, e. g., is nothing else than a thorough analysis and defense of the *Augsburg Confession* in its various parts. Against the Roman Catholic Confutation it examines the various propositions to prove in the light of God's Word that they are Scriptural. So also is the *Formula of Concord* an analysis of the *Augsburg Confession*. Luther's explanations, in his *Catechism*, of the Decalog, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer do nothing else than carefully analyze for clear teaching these fundamental parts of God's Word. And so the Church has always done when it wished to teach the divine truth over against error. It has always analyzed its own Confessions and the errors of the opponents to set forth with full clearness the teachings of God's Word. In fact, this is the only way the Church can teach the divine truth clearly and distinctly. To understand the sum of anything, one first must understand its parts. Unless we know the parts, we cannot know the sum. If in analysis there lies disunity, it is not the fault of the analysis, but that of the persons who refuse to accept the divine truth. The analysis does not cause disagreement, but merely brings out in strong relief the existing doctrinal discord. If, as the writer claims, concord lies in synthesis (*i. e.*, in merely judging the "whole" of the Confessions), this is only a concord of doctrinal indifference and unionism, which can never be a "winning witness of Jesus."

In short, let no one deceive himself by specious phrases and illusive theories, but let us face the facts fairly and squarely, doing the same in the realm of the spiritual that we do in that of earthly, as when we analyze political platforms, formulas of chemistry, and the like. The writer's error is similar to that of all modern theologians who demand that the divine truth should be judged by the *Schriftganze*, that is, by the scope or spirit of Scripture. But what the "totality of Scripture" is, depends on the person who sets it forth. Luther's "spirit of Scripture" is radically different from that of Fosdick and other Modernists. So, after all, the "synthesis" which the writer pleads for does not make for concord or unity; what it produces is only suppression and rejection of God's Word.

When the writer says that "both the Word and the Church are by inspiration," he shows by this Romanizing expression that he repudiates

the Christian doctrine of the divine inspiration of Holy Scriptures. When he writes: "God forbid that at this late date we should stumble over grammatical, logical, punctuational, or philosophical obstacles," he obscures the point at issue. The Church's fight is for the preservation of God's Word—and of the whole of God's Word, and of God's Word in all its parts; and in that fight, grammar certainly must be considered. The ancient adage: "*Theologia debet esse grammatica*" still holds, and Luther's contention that if anyone's grammatical interpretation of Scripture is faulty, then also his theology becomes questionable, has timeless value. Let us be honest in contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. There is a false contrast in the very heading which introduces the letter.

J. T. M.

Unity in Diversity.—*The Christian Beacon* (July 23, 1942) reproduces "sections of Dr. H. M. Woods' book [title not given] prepared for students on the issues of the Protestant Reformation as they pertain to the Roman Catholic hierarchy today as ever." Against "the Church of Rome's mistaken conception of oneness of ecclesiastical organization" it shows and defends the "true Protestant unity," which is explained as follows:

"Protestant unity is clearly taught in Holy Scripture and is a part of that precious 'liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free' (Gal. 5:1). This liberty consists of *oneness in essentials* and a reasonable latitude in nonessentials. St. Paul illustrates this by the human body, which has many members differing from the other and each having its own special function, as the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot: yet all sympathizing and co-operating, and together constituting one *living organism*. Variety of members, so far from hindering the action of the body, really helps it, and makes it more useful. So, says the Apostle, it is with the Church of God and its members. God in His wisdom has bestowed on different groups of men various gifts of thought, character, education, etc. These various gifts He allows to have play within reasonable limits so that *each denomination contributes something which the others do not possess*, and the sum total brings to all variety and enrichment of Christian faith and service. Variety in the branches of the Church no more militates against true spiritual unity than variety in the members of the human body militates against the oneness and efficiency of that body."

From this presentation of "Protestant unity" one may learn how much confusion may result from the application of the words of our Creed "I believe in the *one* holy Christian Church" to the visible Church on earth. This mistake is made by the Romanists and generally also by the Calvinists, though the latter acknowledge the *ecclesia invisibilis*. The Romanists teach, as Dr. Woods expresses it in another place, "a mechanical and forced union," the Calvinists, a "unity in diversity." Confessional Lutheranism allows unity in diversity only so far as ceremonies or other externals are concerned. It permits no unity in diversity in regard to doctrine or practice, for here Christ's command holds: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). It is true, Lutheranism can bear with weak brethren in non-

essentials as long as they are open to conviction. But it cannot tolerate error even in nonfundamentals in case such error has its source in a contentious spirit which refuses to heed God's Word. (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:37, 38.)

However, while true Lutheranism earnestly desires to see in operation a visible orthodox Christian Church on earth, united both in faith and practice, it finds the "oneness" of the Church in the *communion of saints*, the *ecclesia visibilis*, thus avoiding the dilemma which Dr. Woods vainly endeavors to avoid when he resorts to the principle of "oneness in essentials and a reasonable latitude in nonessentials." This unscriptural principle of the Reformed Church had led to the formation of numerous sects within the Calvinistic fold, all championing diverse pet teachings and yet unionistically fellowshiping with one another as a spiritual brotherhood, and this in open revolt against all Scripture passages which condemn such syncretism. In the last analysis it has led to the utter rejection of Christian doctrine in the great apostasy known as Modernism. The illustration which Dr. Woods here quotes from 1 Cor. 12:4 ff. does not at all apply to the false unity which he is defending, but to the different forms of Christian service rendered by the various members of the Church. According to St. Paul's teaching, however, the Church in matters of doctrine and practice should be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (Cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 14:37; etc.)

The principle of "oneness in essentials and a reasonable latitude in nonessentials" has been sponsored also in Lutheran circles in our country, and the deplorable confusion to which it has led is sadly attested by the early development of the Lutheran Church in the United States. It is a principle foreign to the spirit of true Lutheranism and withal a most destructive principle. The glory of Lutheranism does not consist in "unity in diversity," but in full unity of faith and practice, thus exemplifying (though weakly, since there is nothing perfect on earth) the true spiritual unity of the *communio sanctorum*. The position of genuine Lutheranism on the *ecclesia visibilis* and the *ecclesia invisibilis*, and their relation to each other, alone is logical and Scriptural, and it alone will preserve to the Church that soundness in doctrine and practice that is so vital to its well-being and progress.

If it is said that since members of the *communio sanctorum* are connected on earth with erring churches they are themselves sponsoring error, the very satisfactory reply has been given that they err in ignorance since their faith in Christ prompts them to dedicate themselves to the Lord in body, soul, and mind for full obedience to His Word and will.

J. T. M.

The Originality of Christianity.—In *The Christian Advocate* (June 25, 1942) Harris Franklin Rall, in his special department "Dr. Rall Answers Questions on Beliefs," explains to his readers the "originality of Jesus and of the Christian religion." In the final analysis he deals with what is ordinarily denominated the absoluteness of the Christian religion.

In his reply Dr. Rall, professor of Systematic Theology in the Garrett Bible Institute, says: "There are two dangers that we need to avoid here. One is to suppose that Christianity in its ideas, its ideals, and its religious

rites (such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper) is totally different from every other religion; or even to hold that outside of Christianity no truth, no virtue, and no faith are to be found. Hardly anyone would go to this extreme, but there is often the fear that in any such admission we endanger the uniqueness of Christianity. To hold such a position, however, is surely to think unworthily of God. We believe in the one living God of all peoples and all history. Supremely revealed in Christ, He is yet the God who has everywhere and always sought to disclose Himself to men and has never left Himself without a witness. And wherever the love of God meets human need, and the truth of God speaks to the human heart, and man makes response in repentance and faith, there in some measure is real religion. Not uncommon is the second danger: to suppose that there is really no difference between the various faiths, that truth is everywhere, and that each people has its own best religion."

To avoid the two mistakes, Dr. Rall suggests the following way out: "We believe in the living God who in Jesus Christ brings the supreme and sure revelation of Himself and the gift of forgiveness and fellowship with Himself. If elsewhere there is any truth or faith, we rejoice, for this is from the living God. We do not seek to establish Christianity by denial or depreciation; we believe that in Christ the living God has spoken to men and is reconciling men to Himself. Our systems of doctrine are imperfect; so are our lives; so is the historical Church. . . . In Jesus as the Truth and the Way and the Life we have what is central and unique and original in Christianity. This does not mean that there was no truth before Him; let us remember that the Old Testament was His Bible and the synagog His Church. . . . The ages prepared for Christ; He took up in Himself the life and truth of the past. But He Himself was new. He was the supreme deed of a God who had always been acting; He was the clear, sure Word of God who had always been speaking."

Dr. Rall here follows such rationalists as Harnack, Ritschl, Fosdick, and others who regard Christianity merely as the most complete, the most adequate, the supreme revelation of God. The difference between Christianity and other religions (according to these men) therefore is one of degree only, not one of kind. Dr. Pieper in his *Christliche Dogmatik* (as do all truly Christian theologians) rightly condemns this view; for Christianity is not simply the best religion, but the only religion. It is true: also man-made religions more or less teach the divine Law since this is written in man's heart. But Christianity alone teaches as its central doctrine the vicarious atonement, and only Christianity therefore proclaims the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Rall, as most rationalists, bestows great praise upon Christ and uses the customary Christian dogmatic terminology, though not in its traditional sense. We must, however, not be deceived by this subtle hypocrisy. Modernism, despite all its pious phrases, rejects the "blood religion" of orthodox Christianity and therefore has no other way of salvation than following the noble example of Christ's exemplary life. Briefly expressed, the originality of Jesus consists in the amazing fact that by the shedding of

His blood He has become the Savior of the world. Other religions have teachers; Christianity has a divine Savior. Just that is the originality of the Christian religion, or as Dr. Rall calls it, its uniqueness.

J. T. M.

Church Conditions in Norway.—Developments in the Norwegian ecclesiastical sphere seem to have reached the crisis stage. The *Lutheran Companion* of Aug. 20, 1942, in an editorial, submits pertinent information:

"What appears to be a complete break between the Lutheran Church of Norway and the Quisling-dominated State has occurred, according to news dispatches reaching this country on July 27. The separation between Church and the Nazi government in Norway became a fact when six leaders of the Church met secretly in Oslo and set up a provisional church council. They also drew up a manifesto addressed to Norwegian churchmen, declaring that no compromise peace with the Quisling regime was possible and that the Church of Norway would continue to function independently and, if necessary, against the Nazi rule in that country.

"This is a fateful decision, but it is clear that the Church in Norway had no other alternative. Not only had the Quisling government openly assumed spiritual prerogatives which did not belong to it, but it had interfered with the internal affairs of the Church and sought to deprive it of its freedom of action.

"Not only this, but it had also assumed the authority of deposing the regularly ordained bishops of the Church and of appointing new ones in their stead. The consecration of the latter was not in accordance with the traditions and canons of the Church, which require that this rite shall be performed by regularly consecrated bishops of the Church.

"It is clear that the situation in Norway between the Church and State has become an intolerable one, and the regularly constituted leaders of the Church had no alternative but to declare their complete independence of a treasonable government which is trying to compel the Church to bow to despotic foreign yoke. In reality, the bishops and other heroic spiritual leaders of Norway are fighting for a free Church, but, in doing so, they are also fighting for a free country and a free people.

"Perhaps the events in Norway will prove to be providential and that the separation between Church and State, precipitated by an emergency, may become a permanent one. Although the relationship between Church and State in all of the Scandinavian countries has been a salutary one in many respects, there are many church leaders who have believed that a free Lutheran Church in these lands would become more virile and spiritual in character than a State Church. The Lutheran Church in America has been cited as an example of the advantages of a free Church.

"In any event, all Lutherans throughout the world will pray for their brethren in Norway, that God may strengthen and help His people in these trying days, and that the Church of Christ may prove victorious over all its adversaries."

A.

The Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference Seventy Years Old. Since the 1942 convention of the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference was canceled, Dr. L. Fuerbringer, its present President, has published the reasons why this was done together with an account of the special meeting of repre-

sentative men of the Synodical Conference who made the decision. What interests us above all in the article is a personal note of Dr. Fuerbringer attached to his report, which, we believe, deserves careful consideration by all who are connected with the Synodical Conference. We quote the paragraphs as they are published in the *Lutheran Sentinel* of July 27, 1942. Dr. Fuerbringer writes:

"The Synodical Conference has now been in existence for seventy years. It is a union of synods which unwaveringly acknowledge the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and adhere to the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the year 1580, the so-called Concordia. In these seventy years the Synodical Conference had as its purpose and goal what is declared in its Constitution, 'outward expression of the unity of the spirit existing among the respective synods; mutual strengthening in faith and confession; promotion of unity in doctrine and practice and the removal of any threatening disturbance thereof; co-operation in matters of common interest; . . . union of all Lutheran synods of America into one single orthodox American Lutheran Church.' In this sense the Synodical Conference has labored for seventy years and wherever difficulties and disturbances arose has exerted itself to solve and remove them. The Synodical Conference is God's work, and its confession and purpose are God-pleasing because in accord with Holy Scriptures.

"The writer has had personal contact with the Synodical Conference since 1886 and has rather regularly attended the conventions for the last fifty-six years. Anyone interested in its history can readily inform himself of the genuine joy and gratitude of our Fathers when the Synodical Conference, after extended negotiations and efforts, was finally called into being. In these seventy years there were indeed difficulties and differences of opinion, but throughout earnest efforts were made at a brotherly, God-pleasing solution. We repeat: the Synodical Conference is the work of God. The times are fraught with dangers for the confessional Church; difficulties and attacks are apparent. And for this reason all honest Christians sincerely pray to God that He might grant to all members of the Synodical Conference and maintain among them a spirit of true brotherliness and love, sincere confidence in one another, and that He may heed and fulfill the ancient prayer:

Unto Thy Church grant, Lord, Thy grace,
Peace, concord, patience, fearlessness."

Dr. Fuerbringer in these paragraphs calls attention to a number of important points. In the first place, quoting the Constitution of the Synodical Conference, he mentions as one purpose of the Conference the "union of all Lutheran synods of America into one single orthodox American Lutheran Church." That is one of the purposes of the Synodical Conference still, for the clause in the Constitution has never been revoked. In the second place, the Synodical Conference itself was called into being only after "extended negotiations and efforts." Let us not be discouraged if today the pursuit of a God-pleasing church union is a very difficult and thankless task. In the third place, Dr. Fuerbringer calls for the prayers of all members of the Conference that God may maintain it in the dangers, difficulties, and attacks of the present time.

Let us offer up our prayer on that behalf, but let us also add our intercessions that God, in His infinite mercy, may gather all Lutherans who are willing to stand foursquare on His precious Word and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church into one spiritually united Church; for as the bringing about of the Synodical Conference was God's work, so also it will be God's work to bring about a "union of all Lutheran synods in America into one single orthodox American Lutheran Church." Lastly, as the acceptance of God's Word in its truth and purity was the unconditional basis of the Synodical Conference, so also true unity in faith and Lutheran practice must characterize the "orthodox American Lutheran Church" for which so many earnest Lutherans have been working these many years and still are working with ardent zeal. President Fuerbringer's report indeed offers a very timely and important message.

J. T. M.

The Study of Scripture and of Christian Doctrine in Lutheran Seminaries. The *Journal of Theology* of the American Lutheran Conference (June, 1942) contains a most interesting "Study in Curriculum Offerings and Requirements of Twenty-two Lutheran Seminaries" in the fields of Biblical Instruction and Systematic Theology. The statistics in general speak well for our own curriculum in the two mentioned fields at Concordia Seminary. In fact, in the department of General Bible Study St. Louis ranks highest with 159 semester hours, in the Old Testament (with Hebrew) with 96 semester hours and in the New Testament with 63. The writer, the Rev. C. Umhau Wolf, M. A., M. S. T., fellow, Hartford Theological Seminary, introduces his statistical report on Bible study with the remarks: "The Lutheran Church believes that its founder rediscovered and unchained the Bible. It is to be expected, therefore, that the Lutheran minister receives a strong foundation training in essentially Biblical courses. That same founder was a translator of the Bible, and so it likewise is to be expected that Lutheran seminaries would give a great place to the study of the original languages of the Bible. Both of these expectations are borne out by the present study and analysis of the curricula in the twenty-two Lutheran seminaries in the United States and Canada." By way of further explanation he says: "All of the seminaries offer or advertise work in the Old and New Testaments. Only three seminaries do not offer any Hebrew or Aramaic. However, eleven do not require it for a certificate of graduation. All the seminaries offer some Greek, and only two permit graduation without the study of New Testament Greek. . . . The total advertised semester hours in all departments of the twenty-two seminaries is 3,050. Of this number 1,234 are in the Department of Biblical Studies, or 41.1%. This is above the average of 57 seminaries in 1930—1931, devoting 38% to the combined study of English Bible and Biblical Languages."

Still more important are the writer's remarks on the study of Systematic Theology in Lutheran seminaries. He writes by way of introduction: "Among other Protestants, Lutheran ministers are noted for their theological unanimity. Despite the unfortunate and, perhaps, inconsequential [?] synodical divisions, the Lutherans are more united than any other denomination in America. In a study of theological beliefs Lutheran pastors agreed on 44 out of 56 items. This is both a cause and

a result of the type of training the Lutheran minister receives. . . . In the twenty-two Lutheran seminaries in America the study of Systematic Theology ranks second in importance, judged by courses required and offered. Only the Department of Bible and Biblical Languages exceeds the importance of Systematic Theology from this point of view. . . . The combined number of semester hours offered in the twenty-two seminaries in this department for the school year 1940—1941 was 561.3. This is 18.4% of the total number of hours advertised. This likewise is above the average of 55 seminaries offering such courses in 1930—1931, in which only 12.5% of all offerings were in Theology and Philosophy. . . . The average curriculum would advertise 25.5 hours and require 21.7 hours in Systematic Theology. The proportion of required hours to the total offered in the department is the highest of any department of study in the Lutheran curriculum."

Next the writer offers some interesting statistics on courses in Christian doctrine. Here again Concordia, St. Louis, ranks highest with 45 advertised semester hours, but Concordia, Springfield, ranks highest with 36 required semester hours. In Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion Gettysburg ranks highest with 15 advertised semester hours and Suomi with 11 required semester hours. The writer comments on these figures as follows: "From these tables one interesting thing is apparent. In the Lutheran Church of America the reputation for liberal thinking, whether deservedly or not, has become attached to Gettysburg Seminary. This is either the result of or the cause of the above ranking of Gettysburg as lowest in requirements of Christian Doctrine and Systematic Theology *per se* and as highest in advertised offerings in Philosophy. The next lowest in Systematic Theology requires twice as much work as Gettysburg. There is allowance made in this judgment for the reduction of the Gettysburg *term* hour into semester hours. On the other hand, the Synodical Conference has generally the reputation for fundamentalism and conservatism. It is in line with this reputation that Concordia, St. Louis, offers the most work in Systematic Theology, while its sister seminary, Concordia at Springfield, Ill., requires the most work in Christian Doctrine. The Synodical Conference places three of its seminaries among the first four according to hours in this department.

"Comparative Symbolics," the study of other Christian churches, forms an important sector of the total curricula of Lutheran seminaries. There are some fifteen courses in varying length offered with this title. Many non-Lutheran pastors have made it known personally to the writer that this is one subject greatly missed in their general theological training. The confessional emphasis of Lutheran Christianity makes this training necessary along with the study of Lutheran Symbols. Thirteen seminaries offer courses in the Lutheran Confessions. In addition to a general course in Symbolics, seminaries have courses entitled 'The Large Catechism,' 'Formula of Concord,' etc."

The writer closes the article with a plea which deserves very much to be heeded and which, we believe, Lutheran seminaries will heed more and more in the present crisis and in the period it will usher in. He says: "The place of doctrine in the Lutheran Church has been maintained through the age of its expansion. It is to be hoped that in this

age of theological experiment and educational theorizing the Church of the Reformation will not permit its backbone to be broken or bent. By emphasizing the departments of Bible and Systematic Theology the Church will remain strong, the ministers will be able to combat the heresies of the world and to strengthen the faith of the sheep within their flocks."

J. T. M.

The "Orthodoxy" of the New-Supernaturalism. There is reason to assume that Christian ministers at times are inclined to take the "orthodoxy" of the New-Supernaturalists rather seriously just as if they were willing to leave humanism and return to positive Christianity. Reinhold Niebuhr especially seems to make that impression on many. *The Calvin Forum* (June-July, 1942) in an article entitled "Christian Theism and the New-Supernaturalism," very fittingly illustrates the "band wagon of the New-Supernaturalists" by the story of a man in hiding a short distance from the road. To a friend on the road he had given instructions to play a doleful march in case the passer-by should be a man and a bridal march in case of a woman. For a while all went well, but suddenly the friend played a mixture of joyous and sad music. "I thought," the friend later explained, "you would understand that it was a monk." "Such a monkish tune," says the *Calvin Forum*, "is that of the New-Supernaturalist. It sounds both orthodox and heterodox." Of the New-Supernaturalists Reinhold Niebuhr perhaps is still the most popular, but as Georgia Harkness, who studied under him, says in *The Resources of Religion* (p. 97), he did not "manifest a somersault back to Fundamentalism" and "it would be impossible for him to revert to Biblical literalism." These statements are proved correct by what Niebuhr himself has written. Regarding the Bible he believes that it contains "irrelevant precepts deriving their authority from their sometimes quite fortuitous inclusion in a sacred canon" and "social and moral standards which may once have had legitimate or accidental sanctity, but which have, whether legitimate or accidental, now lost both religious and moral meaning" (Cf. *Calvin Forum*, Vol. III, Aug.-Sept., 1937.) The writer of the article remarks on this: "It is apparent that such a view of the Bible must upset the other doctrines as held by the theist [that is, the Christian believer]. The Biblical account of the Fall of Man becomes a myth, which is true at all times, for it occurs again and again. The New-Supernaturalist speaks much of Christ, using traditional terms with a nontraditional meaning, but from all appearance this Christ is not the traditional Son of God. Niebuhr relates in *Beyond Tragedy* how, at the time of his ordination, he was perplexed about confessing 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.' The words *resurrection of the body* caused him much difficulty. Now, however, he says 'the stone which we then rejected has become the head of the corner.' He realizes the importance of the phrase and we gladly agree; but then comes [Niebuhr's denial of the Christian doctrine]: 'The idea of the resurrection of the body can, of course, not be literally true.' And later: 'Resurrection is the divine transformation of human existence' (pp. 289-290). The vicarious atonement of Calvary is explained in these words: 'The Savior dies not because He has sinned, but because He has not sinned. He proves thereby

that sin is so much a part of existence that sinlessness cannot maintain itself in it.' (*Op. cit.*, p. 167.) . . . Becoming impatient with the world order, Niebuhr also becomes impatient with the orthodox Church and speaks of its 'petrified doctrine and irrelevant puritanical precepts.' We agree with the New-Supernaturalist that this world is in a bad way, for it is not 'of the Way.' We also agree when he shouts that God should be on a high throne and not on a high chair. We would not even maliciously remind him that that is what the theist has maintained all along. 'Sin is real,' he tells us. That, too, we have known all along, and we hope that he understands what he says. When, however, such statements are merely 'selected passages' from a Bible which they refuse to accept as infallible, we realize that what they select today they may reject tomorrow. Their Supernaturalism is 'new' as in conquered Europe there is 'new' bread; it does not contain the real stuff."

The New-Supernaturalism or Neo-Orthodoxy is as far removed from orthodox Christian belief as was Ritschianism in the footsteps of which it follows very closely. It is nothing else than a modified brand of Modernism with new twists of speech and new emphases. J. T. M.

To Say the Truth.—Under this heading, Paul Ylvisaker in the *Lutheran Sentinel* (April 27, 1942) makes a historical correction, which because of the importance just now attaching to the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (since next year it intends to celebrate its ninetieth anniversary as the direct successor of the former Norwegian Synod), no doubt, deserves far greater publicity than it can receive in so small a periodical as the *Sentinel*.

The error was committed by the *Lutheran Herald* (Feb. 10, 1942), which claimed that Nils Thorbjornson Ylvisaker, the first ordained pastor of that name, was a "Haugean layman, who later became an ordained pastor in our church." The correction of this statement is twofold. In America at least, N. T. Ylvisaker was neither a lay preacher nor a Haugean. As the article says, "the pioneer Nils Ylvisaker was hardly a lay preacher in the accepted American understanding of the term. He was licensed as a traveling emissary of the Mission Society in Norway. . . . It was the Rev. H. A. Preus, who in 1867 went to Norway to seek pastors for the new settlement here. Finding out from personal conversations of Nils Ylvisaker's doctrinal soundness, he, on behalf of his Norwegian Synod, asked him to come to America. He informed Nils Ylvisaker of the fact that the spirit of the Haugean movement in America was not that of Hauge, but rather that of Elling Eielsen. Eielsen was a schismatic of the first order.

"Nils Ylvisaker learned of the resulting confusion of church life in America and cast his lot with the Norwegian Synod. . . . For such loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions and to Scriptural teaching with regard to the divinity of the minister's call to a local congregation he was bitterly attacked. We read in the Introduction to his book of sermons published in 1876: 'It is a well-known fact that the church body of which I am a member (and I thank God from my heart that He has brought me into it, in spite of its weaknesses), the Norwegian Synod, has been the object of the most damaging accusations and attacks. A chief accusation has been and is that we make the way to heaven

wide, that we deceive souls by a hope of salvation without the heart's thoroughgoing conversion to the Lord, yes, that we even oppose all spiritual life in the congregations. I personally, not the least, have been the object of such accusations. In rapid succession they have accused me of having fallen from the old simple faith, of having sold my convictions for a clergyman's collar, yes, that I have by an oath obligated myself not to preach the Law. . . . I know as far as I am concerned, as before the countenance of the All-knowing, that I from the heart ask for the old paths where is the good way, and in spite of weakness I humbly pray God that I might receive His wisdom and power to walk therein."

The writer admits that N. T. Ylvisaker was a lay preacher while still in Norway, for "circumstances in that country called him to conduct devotional meetings from place to place. But when the same Ylvisaker came to America, he wanted nothing to do with Eielsen and his followers, who were a thorn in the flesh of the Norwegian Synod." In America, Ylvisaker, therefore, was neither a lay preacher in the ordinary meaning of that term nor a Haugean, as the word is commonly understood.

The writer concludes his article with the words: "Nils Thorbjornson Ylvisaker was regularly ordained by Synod officials, accepted a call, wore a gown in the pulpit, and preached that we are saved by grace alone, without the deeds of the Law. His whole theology was contrary to the conflicting philosophy of 'Opgjoer.' He was not a 'Haugean' in the sense that the word is used today. Let us speak the truth, and the whole truth."

As we read the last admonition, we thought of the utter impossibility in many instances of speaking the truth and the whole truth regarding the great men and movements in the early history of our Church. Frequently the necessary sources are lacking, and the testimony is contradictory. For this reason, men who are acquainted with the facts ought to attest the truth, even at the cost of being regarded as picayunish in their emphasis on details, in order that the history of our Church may accurately and truthfully be told both by us and those coming after us. To call N. T. Ylvisaker a "Haugean layman" certainly does not do justice to this great Lutheran pioneer in America. J. T. M.

Brief Items. — The Franciscan Fathers have purchased in the loop district of Chicago a theater and the building in which it is located. The price was \$600,000.00. It is the intention to make the building a mission center with a chapel and monastery. Rome evidently is still very aggressive.

Dr. Daniel A. Poling, international president of the World Christian Endeavor, editor of the *Christian Herald*, and pastor of the famous Baptist Temple in Philadelphia, has announced a leave of absence as pastor to become an Army chaplain. He served as a chaplain in the last war.

The Lutheran

In Berkeley, Calif., Dr. J. Hayden Tufts, one of the first faculty members of the University of Chicago and a prominent American philosopher, died August 6.

A.

Book Review — Literatur

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

The Babylonian Genesis. The Story of the Creation. By Alexander Heidel. Research Assistant on the Assyrian Dictionary project of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill. 131 pages, plus 13 pages containing 18 Illustrations. Price, \$1.50.

Dr. Heidel of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, a member of our Missouri Synod and a graduate of Concordia Seminary, has written this scholarly, learned book with the evident intention of defending the divine character of the account of the creation of the world as it is given to us in the book of Genesis. He examines the so-called Babylonian Genesis known to scholars as *Enuma elish*, which unbelieving scholars have claimed to be the source of our Biblical account of the beginning of the world, and he shows the vast differences existing between the Babylonian and the Mosaic narratives. Since Dr. Heidel, ever since he left Concordia Seminary, has devoted himself to a study of the languages and literatures of the ancient Mesopotamian countries, he is well qualified for an investigation of the topics he treats. He meets the unbelieving scholars on their own ground and demonstrates that their views are untenable. The main body of the treatise is divided into four chapters, having these headings: 1) *Enuma elish*; 2) Other Babylonian Creation Stories; 3) Excerpts from Damascius and Berossus; 4) Old Testament Parables. The first chapter contains the story of the finding of the tablets on which the ancient narrative is found, together with information as to the origin of the work and a translation of the document preserved for us on seven tablets. The translation is copiously provided with explanatory or supplementing footnotes. Dr. Heidel points out correctly that the *Enuma elish* really should not be called the Babylonian creation account, but rather the story of the conflict between the gods of Babylonia. As one reads his translation of this work, one is reminded strongly of the Theogony of Hesiod with its weird, fantastic fables of the contests involving Kronos, Zeus, the Titans, and the Giants. If anybody is impressed by claims made by the so-called Pan-Babylonians, let him read this so-called epic, and there is not much fear that he will continue to stand in awe of such claims. Dr. Heidel deserves our sincere thanks for making this ancient work accessible to us in a convenient form.

While upholding definitely the divine, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the author does not deny that there may be some relation between the Babylonian and the Biblical accounts. His idea is that Moses may have employed some of the phraseology and forms of description found in the Babylonian document. As a parallel he points to the well-known circumstance that Old Testament writers used secular works in drawing up the inspired narrative, being, of course, led to do so by the Spirit of God. In passing he mentions Paul's use in 1 Cor. 15:33

of a verse from the *Thais* of Menander, where the Apostle does not give a hint that he is quoting. In the same connection he mentions Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12, where the Apostle declares that what he is saying is something ancient poets have said. The underlying thought, of course, is that what these secular sources state is true and is given the stamp of correctness by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The illustrations included at the end of the volume are fascinating. Attention should be drawn especially to the "Restoration of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar (604—562 B. C.) as seen from the western bank of the Euphrates" (Figure 11), and "Restoration of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar as seen from the north end of the procession street. . . . To the right are the so-called 'hanging gardens'" (Figure 12). W. ARNDT.

A Child's Story of the World and Its People. By Amelia C. Krug. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 176 pages. Price, \$1.00.

The Church of Our Fathers. By Roland H. Bainton. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 248 pages. Price, \$2.50.

A Short History of Christianity. Written in Collaboration by Archibald G. Baker, Editor; Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., John T. McNeill, Matthew Spinka, Winfred E. Garrison, William W. Sweet. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 279 pages. Price, \$2.00.

The Growth of the Christian Church. By Robert Hastings Nichols, Professor of Church History, Auburn Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary. Revised Edition. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 380 pages. Price, \$2.00.

Four history textbooks, issued within half a year! Interest in history seems to be increasing! Which is commendable; in times like the present, when the world is shaken to its foundations, social and economic institutions which have stood firm for centuries are crashing, and the entire temple of civilization seems tottering on the brink of dissolution, it is well to take a bird's-eye view of past history, to note an omnipotent Providence ruling the affairs of man and ever and again bringing order out of chaos, and to turn away with the renewed conviction that all's well with the world because God is still in His heaven.—The first title is a foundation book for the study of history, written by a teacher who understands the language and the ideas of children. She tells the story of the world to the 8—10-year-olds in a method that is admirable; in continuous form, real children linking up the information they are getting with their own experiences. The early periods of world's history are, of course, traversed with seven-league boots. More space is devoted to American history. Bible and secular history are well correlated, impressing upon the little reader at once that there is only one history, as there is only one Creator and Ruler of the universe. Every chapter is followed by questions and suggestions for those who assist the children in their studies. It is a book that can be recommended without any reservations whatsoever.

The Church of our Fathers, too, was designed to appeal to the minds and imaginations of younger readers. The author, professor of Church

History at the Yale Divinity School, evidently had children in mind when he planned and wrote the book; he presents an almost continuous collection of adventure and hero stories; yet every page carries marks of competent scholarship; the author has the faculty of summing up in one brief striking sentence the essentials of an event or a movement. The illustrations are unique, reproduced from old manuscripts, drawings, coins, and woodcuts, always amusing, almost in the nature of cartoons. A vein of whimsical humor runs through the whole text, cropping out in unexpected places. Example: Pope Gregory "became interested in the English because one day in the market place at Rome he saw some English boys for sale as slaves. 'Who are they?' he asked. 'Angles,' was the reply. To which Gregory, who had had no experience with English boys, responded, 'Not Angles, but angels.'" All this makes it interesting reading—for mature students; but I doubt whether the average 10-year-old is sufficiently sophisticated to enjoy reading it. Moreover, the evident intention of the author is to make it amusing, to turn out the ridiculous side in every instance, which, it seems to me, is not the proper way of teaching the history of their Church to the youth of the Church. A perfectly absurd extract from a sermon is given (p. 27) as an example of preaching in the early Church; I suppose it is authentic; but to cite it as characteristic of the preaching of the Church surely gives a false picture to the young reader. The whole book—to quote another reviewer—"leaves a feeling of endless and perhaps pointless see-sawing struggle. I miss a note of triumphant faith and a sense of a thrilling movement which I believe should be present." Do we get an inkling of the reason for this when the author sidesteps any clear, definite assertion of the resurrection of Christ? And near the end of the book he waxes eloquent in an attempt to show that we cannot, in reason, absolutely deny the possibility of miracles; but it is not at all important whether Christ did the wonders told about Him or not. There is not even an allusion to the atoning work of Christ in the book, nor any indication that the author believes in the divine institution and the divine, eternal purpose of the Church. The teacher will find valuable material in the book; but do not give it a place in your school or Sunday school library.

The *Short History of Christianity* was written by six members of the faculty of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, each treating that era of history with which he is most familiar; Professor Shepherd *The Rise of Christianity* and *Christianity and the Fall of Rome*; Professor McNeill *Christianity in Medieval Europe* and *Christianity in the Reformation Era*; Professor Spinka *The History of Eastern Orthodoxy*; Professor Garrison *Christianity in Modern Europe*; Professor Sweet *Christianity in the Americas*; the editor, Professor Baker, adds a chapter on *Christianity Encircles the Globe*. The book is offered as a digest of Church History, "planned for the use of the serious reader who has only a limited time at his disposal. It is also designed as a textbook for study classes." It is adapted for the latter purpose, divided into 32 sections; in the hands of an experienced teacher it may profitably be used as a textbook, though he will have to make numerous corrections owing to the fact that it was written by liberal theologians. As

a reader for the information of the man who has only a limited time at his disposal it will hardly do; it is too brief; too many things are merely mentioned without explanation, for lack of space. I'm afraid all such attempts to build a royal road to the knowledge of history are vain. This is no criticism of the authors; they tried to meet the rushing spirit of the times, to furnish the man who is in a hurry a quick lunch; but, like the advertisements in the pulp magazines: "Learn to play the piano in two lessons!" — it just can't be done!

The fourth title on our list is not a new book, but a standard text revised and brought up to date. It is designed for educational institutions and for adult classes. I know of no better book for this purpose on the market. It is compact, yet comprehensive, offering a third more material than the previously mentioned book. It is divided into 18 chapters (which for class study must perhaps be divided again); questions for review and an adequate list of reference works for further reading are added to each chapter. The author's skill shown in the selection of his material; his clear and simple style of writing are admirable. A sober historical judgment governs his evaluations; you will need few question marks in the margin. One of the things which at once predisposed this reviewer in the author's favor was his statement (p. 4) that "the Hebrews had indeed received *a revelation of God and His will not possessed by the Greeks.*" Such a confession is rare among recent authors. Until we have a textbook of our own for the instruction of our young people, use this book; it will not disappoint you.

THEO. HOYER

Why Believe? Sermons to Establish Faith. By W. R. Johnson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 141 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. Price, \$1.00.

The thirteen brief sermons contained in this book were delivered by the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Galveston, Tex., before high school and college groups with a view to win his hearers for Christ and a joyous profession of the Christian faith. Their rich apologetic and earnest evangelistic elements, their wealth of illustrative material, their striking rebuttal of infidelity, their unusual depth of thought, and their excellent organization entitle them to careful study. The viewpoint from which they are written is that of a grateful Fundamentalist who has returned from Modernism to the faith of his fathers and desires that also others should come back. The theme of the first address forms the title of the book, "Why Believe?" The "Why Believe" Idea is then applied to "Immortality," "God," "The Bible," "Jesus," "The Deity of Christ," "The Atonement," "The Resurrection," "Hell," "Heaven," "Bible Study," "Prayer," "The Church." All of the sermons are interesting, instructive, and convincing, and are written with deep piety and from personal conviction. As many other apologists, the author, however, occasionally overstates his arguments from reason and experience, while at other times his theology is not Scriptural. On page 28, for example, he separates faith from revelation and places it above the latter. "The testimony of faith transcends even that of reason or revelation." As a matter of fact, there is true testimony of faith only as long as faith clings to revelation, that is, Holy Scripture. On page 43 he states that "Revela-

tion is definitely His [God's] own book in a sense that cannot be said of even the Gospels," thus placing the Book of Revelation (an *Antilegomenon*) on a higher plane than the Gospels, though these are *Homo-logoumena*. On page 45 he claims that the sacred writers wrote the Scriptures in five different languages—Hebrew, Babylonian, Syrophenician, Aramaic, and Greek—which simply is not true. On page 51, following Karl Barth, he writes: "All Scripture is inspired, but only that Scripture is inspired to the individual soul which is picked out and illuminated by the Spirit." There are additional historical and theological errors in the book, detracting greatly from its value. But for the pastor who knows how to discriminate between right or wrong it will prove itself a useful help in refuting unbelief and exhibiting the essentials of the Christian faith in a convincing way.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal. Compiled by W. G. Polack. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. XIII and 679 pages. Price, \$4.00.

The author here presents the results of studies pursued while the committee entrusted with the revision of our *Hymnal* was at work. The volume contains a wealth of material, as a mere notation of the contents will show. There is, on 468 pages, a history of the text of the 660 hymns and the 371 tunes contained in the *Hymnal*, together with the original text of translated hymns and of the stanzas omitted in the present selection. Next there are 133 pages of Biographical and Historical Notes on the Authors and Composers, with a list of each author's or composer's contributions to this *Hymnal*. After a bibliography of hymnological reference works various indexes follow; this is the section of the book that will meet with a special welcome on the part of the pastor and the teacher. There is an Index of Biblical References; a Table of Hymns for the Feasts, Festivals, and Sundays of the Church Year; an Index of the First Lines of Original Hymns (in the original language); an Index of First Lines of Stanzas (except of first stanzas); an Alphabetical and a Metrical Index of Tunes; a Topical Index (24 pages, small print); an Alphabetical Index of Authors, of Composers, and of Translators; finally an Index of First Lines.—While the first two sections contain reference material and will perhaps be used only occasionally, a pastor will need these indexes every Sunday, for every service, for it will take years of use before we shall know the contents of our *Hymnal* so well that we are able to turn, at a moment's notice, to the hymn appropriate for the day and for the subject of our sermon, before we can thus make full use of the treasures stored up in our *Hymnal* without the help which this book offers.

THEO. HOYER

On Paths of Destiny. A manual for mission study groups. Synodical Department of Missionary Education and Publicity, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 120 pages. Price, 25 cents.

This is the first of a new series of manuals published in accordance with a resolution of Synod in 1941. The *Proceedings* (p. 198) announce the publication of four volumes, the series to be sold at \$1.00, and the

remark is added: "This price is made possible by a subsidy." No one can look at this first volume and turn the leaves but a minute without realizing that 25 cents does not nearly cover the cost of production. It is a well-printed and beautifully illustrated little volume, which presents a survey of the great task of missions and does it in a manner hitherto not yet attempted. It includes narrative and description as interesting as fiction, presenting a close-up of the labors of those who work in the foreign fields. A very fascinating book, which should rouse interest in missions among the most indifferent. As announced in the *Proceedings* by Pastor L. Meyer, director of the department, the book is intended for general reading; for young people and L. L. L. study groups; for women's organizations, day school teachers, and Sunday school teachers. It will be welcomed by all who desire material for the preparation of lectures on the missionary program of the Church.

TH. GRAEBNER

On Wings of Healing. Prayers and Readings for the Sick and Shut-in.
Compiled by John W. Doberstein. Published by The Muhlenberg
Press, Philadelphia. 104 pages, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$. Price, \$2.00.

Under seventeen subdivisions this book offers prayers and brief meditations in the form of Scripture passages, poetry, and prose for the various needs and troubles arising in life. Beside many fine and beautiful Christian prayers, there are others not as satisfactory. The size of the book makes it rather inconvenient for sick and feeble people. 14 pages are devoted to the title, Foreword, Table of Contents, and 34 pages to the titles of the subdivisions. This may explain to some extent the rather high price. The binding, material, and printing are of high quality.

TH. LAETSCH

Corrigendum. The installment of the article "Verbal Inspiration—a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks" in the August number should have prefixed to it the numeral V.
